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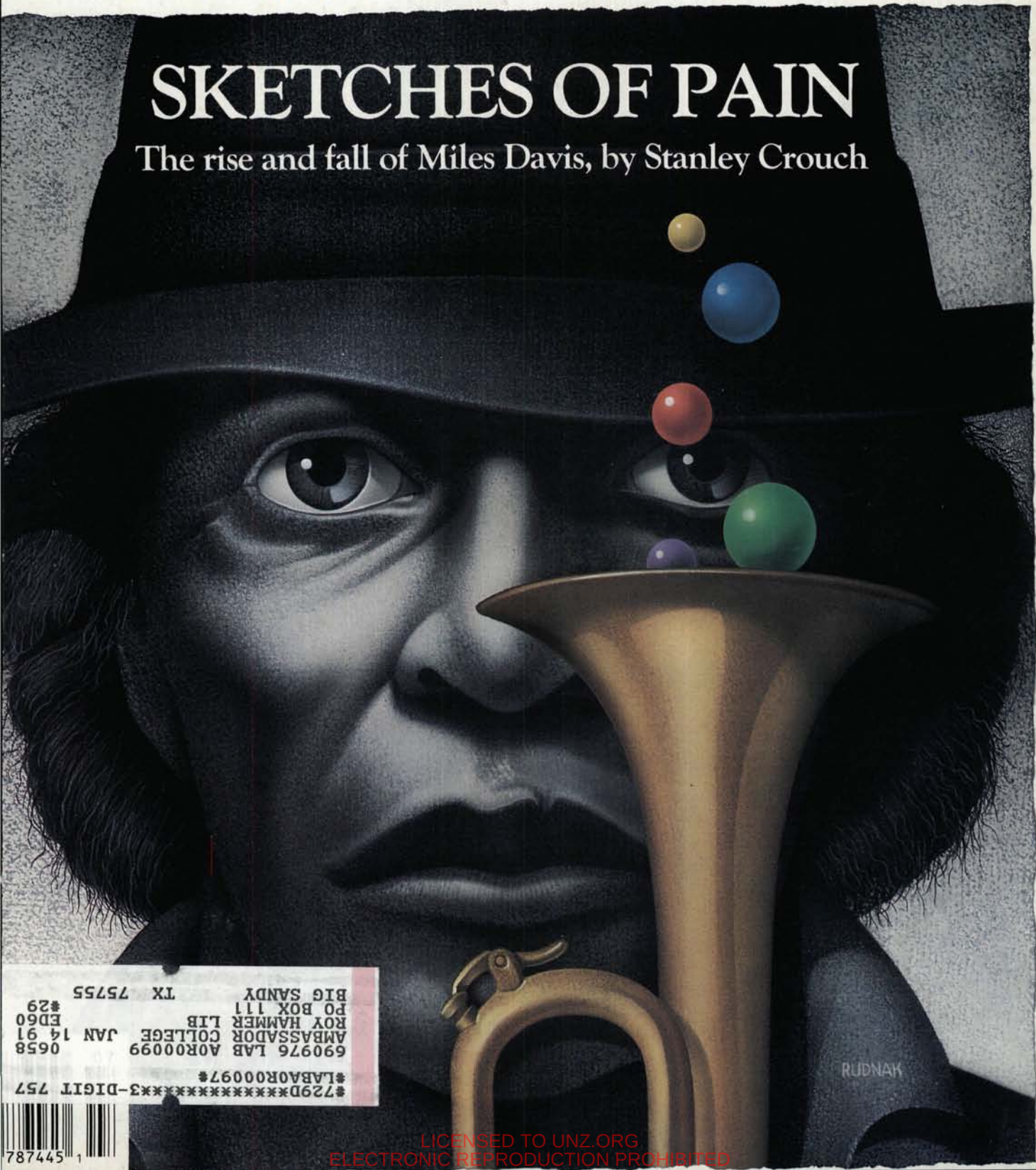
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THE NEW REPUBLIC

The abortion flip-flop olympics • East Germany's secret police • The Barry bust

SKETCHES OF PAIN

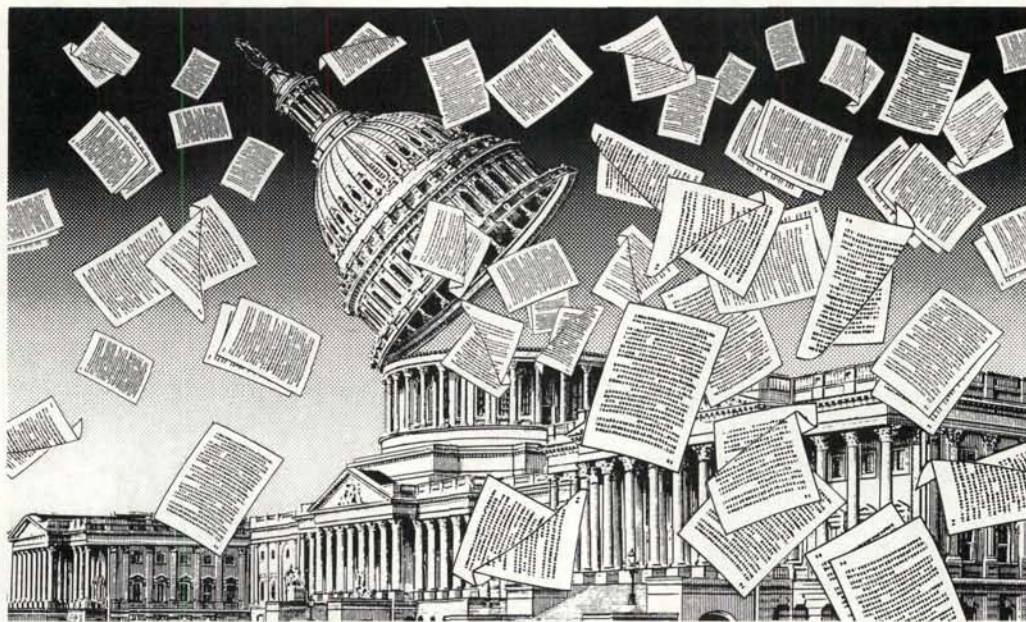
The rise and fall of Miles Davis, by Stanley Crouch



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FEBRUARY 12, 1990



Cover by Theo Rudnak for
THE NEW REPUBLIC. Article on
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WASHINGTON, D.C.
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THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 202, Number 7, Issue 3,917, February 12, 1990. (Printed in the U.S. on January 24, 1990.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 8 & 15, July 9 & 16, July 30 & Aug. 6, Aug. 20 & 27, and Sept. 10 & 17, 1990) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. Leadership Network advertising (212) 684-5500. Yearly subscriptions, \$59.97; foreign, \$89.97; Canada, \$74.97. Back issues, \$3.50 (includes postage & handling). ©1990 by The New Republic, Inc. (ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Available on microfilm from University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 and Bell & Howell, Old Mansfield Road, Wooster, OH 44691. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscribers: Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 56515, Boulder, CO 80322. For subscription problems call 800-274-6686.

TRB[®]

FROM WASHINGTON

Quality time

It may seem presumptuous, but I have decided to apply for the 1990 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. This government-sponsored honor was created by Act of Congress in 1987, in memory of the Secretary of Commerce who died that year in a rodeo accident. It is given in three categories: manufacturing, services, and small business. Not being sure which category the production of an opinion column falls into, I may apply in all three. Please, don't try to dissuade me. As George Bush himself puts it, in Mao-like cadences, on the cover of the application brochure: "The improvement of quality in products and the im-

provement of quality in services—these are national priorities as never before."

Quite right. It had been in the back of my mind that I ought to take steps to improve the quality of this column, now that Japanese and Korean pundits are breathing down my neck and threatening my market share. But well, frankly, what with the end of history and everything, I just couldn't be bothered. However, when a fellow is offered the chance to win "a three-part solid crystal stele standing 14 inches tall" with "an 18 karat gold plated medal . . . embedded in its central form," the medal itself inscribed with "'Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award' and 'The Quest for Excellence' on one side and the Presidential seal on the other side," it really gets him off his heinie and puts him to work upping his "quality excellence criteria," as the brochure adroitly puts it.

Of course, merely applying for a "Malcolm" will take up most of my time for the rest of 1990, leaving little opportunity for actual column production. The instructions alone run 39 pages. First you submit an "Eligibility Determination Form." Then you submit an "Application Package" (15 copies) composed of an "Eligibility Determination Form with official eligibility confirmation," an "Application Form," a "Site Listing and Descriptors Form," and an "Application

Report," which (you will be pleased to hear) "is limited to a maximum of 75 single-sided pages"—not counting "Supplemental Sections" of 50 pages each, and also not counting "two-page overviews, dividers, covers, tab separators, title pages, and tables of contents."

The "Application Report" must be typed "using a fixed pitch font of 12 or fewer characters per inch or a proportional spacing font of point size 10 or larger. Any type may be used." (Gosh, thanks.) The report must address itself to seven "Examination Categories." "Each of the seven Examination Categories has two or more Examination Items. Items are designated by two-digit numbers from 1.1 to 7.8." And, just to make your joy complete, "Each Examination Item includes a set of Areas to Address (Areas) designated by lower case letters and enclosed in a rectangle." Enclosed in a rectangle! That'll show those Japanese a thing or two. As the current Commerce Secretary, Robert Mosbacher, truly notes, the Baldrige Award "has demonstrated that government and industry, working together, can foster excellence."

So here we are, for example, working together for excellence at Category Four, "Human Resource Utilization," Item 4.1, "Human Resource Management," Area (a): "how the company integrates its human resource plans with the quality requirements of business plans." I am ashamed to say that in my writing business I have given this matter no thought whatsoever. And there are 132 more quality considerations just like it that must be addressed if one is to win a "Malcolm."

Although I hate to lend succor to rivals, let me strongly urge all "Malcolm" applicants to read the instructions carefully. They are full of helpful hints. "Items in Categories 1,2,3 and 5 should not be interpreted to require the types of data which are requested in Categories 4, 6 and 7." In my haste to make the April 25 deadline, I almost missed this sage advice.

After April 25, I will have three or four months to tidy up my office in preparation for the Site Visit Review, "conducted by at least five members of the Board of Examiners." And don't suppose that this Board is just some undifferentiated mass of quality expertise. Oh, no. It has members "of three types: Examiners, Senior Examiners, and Judges." Rest assured that "all members of the Board take part in an examination preparation course. . . ."

Then in "October or November" comes the great moment when I receive my award. Last year the awards were presented by President Bush himself. I can't help thinking they'll be looking for something a bit more postindustrial this time around. I'm feeling lucky. But even if I lose, I'll get a consolation prize, also-

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—ROBERT HEILBRONER, *New York Times Book Review*

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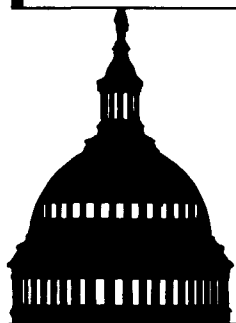
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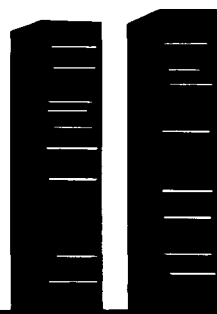
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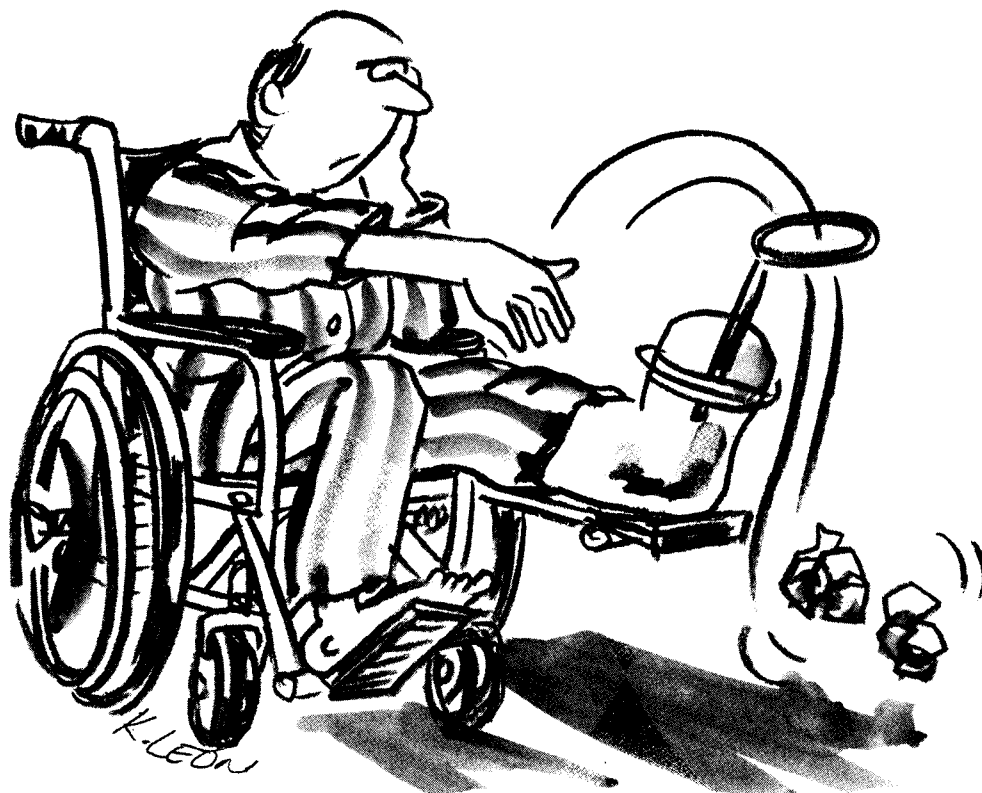


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CORRESPONDENCE

Ethnotruth

To the editors:

Scott McConnell and Eric Breindel appear to be victims of the same "Eurocentric" educational system they attempt to prop up ("Inclusion Illusion," January 8 & 15). By describing the Sobol report as having a "Third World-style radical political perspective," they reveal their prejudice and at the same time miss the major point: the truth is not being taught in our public schools.

It is true that many immigrants came here to escape various forms of political, religious, and economic persecution; however, many were also forcibly removed from their homeland (blacks) or systematically exterminated (American Indians). To this day many minorities continue to be exploited, as is the case of Latino farm laborers in California.

McConnell and Breindel ask if it is "wise . . . to encourage minority students to feel that the mainstream language and culture of the United States does not belong to them." It is obvious that many minorities feel this way already, in part because their role in our history is not accurately portrayed in public schools. The suggestion that a continued whitewashing of American history will decrease racial tension is laughable.

R. V. SCHEIDE
San Francisco, California

To the editors:

The history of culture demands interrelationships. In America what is wanted—from grade school onward—is disconnected, easily regurgitated facts. When I taught art history at the Zanesville branch of Ohio University, I had to cover Byzantine art in the survey course. That meant covering the religion that is the background of the ideas expressed. A Methodist preacher, in a note on his exam, threatened to go to the administration if I didn't stop "teaching religion." Apparently what he wanted was sourceless icons. Too often, it seems to me, that is what the history of ideas has become in this country; it is as though all things were created *in vacuo*.

ANDREW L. J. JAMES
Athens, Ohio

To the editors:

Certainly the heritage of Africa and Asia should be part of general education, and minority peoples might well take interest and pride in specialized study of their own cultures. But history cannot be turned

back: our basic culture, language, and political structure derive from a European heritage. I hope "Eurocentric" has not become the new dirty word of the 1990s.

ARTHUR P. REED, JR.
Southbury, Connecticut

Murder, he wrote

To the editors:

There are many things wrong with "Who Killed Communism?" (TRB, December 4), but two issues in particular call for a brief rebuttal. TRB refuses to believe that Soviet Communists were bent on world domination. Familiarity with the documents of the Communist International might disabuse him of this. Lenin in September 1917 wrote that a Bolshevik power seizure would lead to an armistice with Germany, and an armistice meant "conquering the whole world." In May 1919 Zinoviev, the head of the Comintern, predicted that within a year Europe and possibly even the United States would be Communist. The rationale for such global ambitions was that a Communist regime confined to backward agrarian Russia would either be defeated or degenerate. Time has shown that it was a correct diagnosis.

According to TRB, conservatives have no right to claim any credit for the collapse of communism (has it indeed "collapsed"?), because allegedly they did not believe it possible. In fact, conservatives always believed that steadfast resistance would ultimately defeat communism. President Reagan in a programmatic speech in London in June 1982 spoke of a "great revolutionary crisis" in the Soviet Union and called for promoting democracy everywhere, including the Communist bloc. He expressed confidence that even Moscow would not be immune "from the reality of what is going on in the world." His speech reads much better today than liberal pronouncements of the time calling for a "pragmatic" acceptance of the Soviet status quo for the sake of avoiding confrontations that might result in nuclear war.

RICHARD PIPES
Cambridge, Massachusetts

A rose is not a rose

To the editors:

Regarding Stephen Cohen's recent update on Czechoslovakia ("Roses in the Snow," January 8 & 15), is it possible that the significance of the Portuguese gift of flowers was lost on Cohen? As any European knows (West or East), the red rose is the symbol of socialism. Clenched in a fist, it is the instantly recognizable logo of Socialist Parties throughout the Conti-

nent (including Portugal's). It is, admittedly, less appropriate a political mascot than that identifying America's Democratic Party.

JOHN E. BENEDICT
Washington, D.C.

Visible hands

To the editors:

I don't know what Hill and Knowlton's Frank Mankiewicz is up to in Hungary, but I do know what a Heritage Foundation panel was doing recently in Tallinn, Estonia: showing the Estonians how to create a free market economy. Contrary to what Jacob Weisberg implies in "Bloc Parties" (January 8 & 15), we were not there to lecture the Estonians on the evils of communism, to sing praise of the savior capitalism, or "to provoke a showdown" with Moscow. We were there specifically at the request of Estonian government officials (yes, Communist Party officials), to help them craft a free economy—a measure already approved in principle by Moscow. And we paid our own way.

While Weisberg may think conservatives have nothing good to contribute to the world, we will do our best to continue to disappoint him.

HERB B. BERKOWITZ
*Heritage Foundation
Washington, D.C.*

Disraeli's conversion

To the editors:

In David Cannadine's review of *The Iron Lady* ("The Good Housekeeper," December 11), he states that Benjamin Disraeli was "an indebted novelist and Jewish adventurer." In the interests of accuracy, and at the risk of pedantry, I must point out that though Disraeli may well have been considered by his contemporaries to have been a Jew, and though his ancestors certainly were Jews, nonetheless Benjamin Disraeli was baptized at the church of St. Andrews, Holborn, London, on July 31, 1817 (at the age of 12), and remained a practicing member of the Anglican Church until his death.

WILLIAM ADDAMS REITWIESNER
Silver Spring, Maryland

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READ HIS LIPS

It takes more than the usual allotment of politician's hypocrisy for President Bush to call Senator Daniel Moynihan's proposed cut in Social Security taxes a "charade." Bush, at last check, was using the Social Security trust-fund surplus to conceal \$65 billion of a budget deficit that by honest accounting is now over \$200 billion. Through this device he has made his continuing pledge not to raise taxes look a bit less hideously irresponsible than it in fact is.

In addition, there's the longer-running Reagan-Bush charade. Republicans have successfully taken credit for cuts in taxes and in government spending during the 1980s, even though neither of these actually happened. The fraction of the gross national product spent by government has risen, and the fraction going to taxes has stayed about the same. Hence the deficit. Worse still, those taxes have become less and less progressive, as the tax burden has shrunk at the highest income levels and grown elsewhere. Which brings us back to square one: a big reason for this maldistribution is expanded reliance on the relatively regressive Social Security tax. All told, then, there is plenty of cause to look on with delight as President Bush squirms under the threat of a Moynihan-incited populist stampede.

But does that justify the whole messy exercise? The conventional case for the Moynihan plan is: (a) it

is a politically brilliant bit of counterdemagoguery; and (b) it is good economic medicine—by stripping away Bush's fiscal camouflage, it would inaugurate an era of honest accounting. The conventional case against the plan is that it is politically shrewd but fiscally irresponsible: Congress and Bush probably wouldn't manage to make up the whole payroll tax reduction through spending cuts and tax hikes, and even if they did, they would in the process exhaust the political will that otherwise might have made net inroads on the deficit.

Which side is right? Flip a coin. The Moynihan plan stands a small chance of being hugely constructive (the first scenario) and a big chance of being mildly damaging (the second scenario). The real problem with the plan is more fundamental than any of this.

Moynihan's idea is a retreat from what should be a basic goal of the Social Security system—that each generation save for its own retirement: a big demographic bulge in the work force (such as the baby boom) should build up a big kitty. The alternative—a pay-as-you-go system, in which each year's workers support that year's retirees—is doubly flawed. First, it is unfair: Why should workers pay a penalty for being born into a small generation that follows a large one? Second, it is destabilizing: just as a family that doesn't anticipate distant college costs will be thrown for a



loop when the bills come in, a pay-as-you-go Social Security system will intermittently stunt economic growth. The hefty Social Security trust fund that Moynihan now wants to drain represents a wise anticipation of future needs.

Moynihan's reply, of course, is that the Social Security "surplus" is being drained anyway, flowing into everyday government expenditures. And in a way, he might add, this is worse than simple theft. The justification for the payroll tax's relative regressivity is that Social Security is a pension program and therefore needn't be markedly redistributive. But once you use the payroll tax for general expenditures, you've diluted the progressivity of the whole tax structure.

This line of argument is slightly but significantly misleading. The trust fund isn't being spent, strictly speaking; it's being invested in government bonds. Whether this amounts to "draining" the fund depends on what the government does when the bonds come due. If society can then afford to pay them off through the progressive income tax, then today's workers (tomorrow's retirees) won't have been robbed. If, instead, tomorrow's Social Security benefits are cut, today's workers *will* have been robbed. And if tomorrow's payroll tax is raised to pay off the bonds, a more subtle form of robbery will have been committed, victimizing, in particular, tomorrow's lower-income workers. (Tomorrow's workers, of course, lose in any event, though the details vary by scenario; that is the legacy of the Reagan-Bush deficits.)

The object of the game, then, should be to ensure that in the future the government, and the whole society, is of sufficient health to pay off honorably the IOUs now sitting in the Social Security trust fund. The biggest single step toward that goal is to reduce overall government debt; cut the deficit.

We can't claim to have invented this idea, or, unfortunately, to have discovered any magic way to realize it in the absence of responsible leadership. But a good first step is to move the Social Security fund permanently off the budget books, and force Bush and Congress to confront the deficit in the light of day. Note that, in addition to being economically sound, this idea possesses at least some of the political appeal of the Moynihan plan. The dramatic highlight of that plan is that, after the trust-fund camouflage is removed, and the time comes to meet the Gramm-Rudman deficit-reduction targets, Bush has to make the first move: he must propose a budget that has radically less in revenues than he had anticipated, yet meets the Gramm-Rudman targets—with, naturally, *no new taxes*. Taking Social Security off the books will put Bush in much the same position.

Senator Moynihan (who floated his proposal after reading a column in which TNR's TRB raised the idea) has done a great service. He has got Bush worried, perhaps worried enough to accept honest accounting as part of a stampede-averting compromise. Indeed, Bush

may be worried enough to agree to more than one form of honesty. Perhaps, as many have speculated, he can be persuaded to junk his cherished capital-gains tax cut, a break for the rich that he is disingenuously billing as a long-run revenue raiser.

There is one problem with moving Social Security suddenly off-budget, a problem that would also afflict the Moynihan plan. If \$50 billion or \$60 billion in revenue disappears from the budget books overnight, the Gramm-Rudman goals will look hopelessly distant; Bush and Congress will simply conspire to jettison them, rather than do the usual pathetic but at least mildly productive half-honest reckoning with them. For that reason, the trust fund should be taken off the books in phases, over two or three years. Then, rather than watch Bush sweat a lot on a one-time basis, we can annually watch him sweat a little, perhaps to good effect.

What is critical is that the sweating begin soon—with the fiscal 1991 budget. Some Republicans have made noises about moving Social Security off the books, but they don't want to do so until 1993—which, coincidentally, is after the last election Bush will ever face.

THE BARRY BUST

The Mayor of the District of Columbia, Marion Barry, recently went on a 48-hour odyssey of self-discovery, and here is what he found: "I have spent so much time caring about and worrying about and doing for others, I have not worried about or cared enough for myself." This may strike some people as odd—invoking selflessness as an explanation for spending one's leisure time taking drugs with beautiful models in hotel rooms. But at least it isn't insidious, as is the more conventional explanation for Barry's self-destructive visit to the seventh floor of the Vista International, where he allegedly bought and smoked crack and tried to bed down with an FBI informant, all while the camcorder was purring.

The conventional explanation is that Barry had a debilitating disease: he was in the clutches of drugs, his volition smothered by liquor and cocaine. Barry's remaining apologists have explicitly pushed the disease alibi, and it was implicit in his maudlin plea for pity on the Sunday after his arrest: he was sick, so he would "begin to heal my body, mind, and soul"—after which, presumably, he would be all better (i.e., electable, or at least pensionable). This cycle is the medical equivalent of sin, penance, and redemption, with one difference: to admit sin is to accept blame; to claim illness is to duck it.

The disease paradigm for substance abuse is open to question on scientific and logical grounds, but its practical upshot is what makes it finally unacceptable. Suppose Barry were to get what, in the immediate after-

math of the bust, he has seemed to want: to be allowed, after being "cured," to stay in, or quickly return to, high public office, even though he has broken the laws he was sworn to uphold—not just in taking drugs, but almost certainly in perjuring himself and probably in mispending public funds in pursuit of various forms of exotic entertainment. Will the new, improved Mayor Barry, once forgiven, agree that society should comparably forgive other drug abusers? Should a man who robs or murders someone while on crack be released from prison upon displaying a receipt from the Betty Ford clinic? Of course not. The appropriate penalty for people who rob or murder is to be sent to jail, regardless. And the appropriate penalty for public officials who grossly breach the public trust is to be banished by the voters from office for many years, regardless.

There is a second misconception about drug abuse also brought to light by the Barry incident: the one-toke-and-you're-dead myth. In a well-meaning effort to scare kids away from hard drugs, educators, public officials, and journalists have jointly fostered the idea that to smoke crack once is to fall immediately into its unrelenting, brain-addling thrall. All the Washington schoolkids who have been told this must be confused these days, and not just because the Mayor who toured their schools preaching the evils of drugs has been revealed so spectacularly as a monumental hypocrite. If Mayor Barry was a crackhead, the kids may be forgiven for wondering, how come he was able to give speeches and hold press conferences and do a superficially passable job of running a big city? This leads to two more questions: Is it possible that teachers have been misrepresenting the dangers of drugs? Does that mean drugs are OK? Well, yes and no.

Here, in a form even an adolescent can digest, is the truth about crack, and many other drugs. If you do it once, you are significantly more likely to mess up your life than you otherwise would have been. If you do it a second time, the chances rise again. And so on. At some point—assuming you're not among the few who can indefinitely take such an alluring drug in moderation—continued use entails some degree of ongoing damage to your life, and the chances of something truly catastrophic happening become high. (The fact that the drug does not instantly destroy you, that it allows you to believe you can "handle" it, makes it not less but more dangerous, though in a subtler way than is suggested by TV spots comparing users' brains to eggs in a frying pan.) At a certain point it may in some sense be beyond your power to step back from the brink. Still, when catastrophe strikes, it's all your fault, for two reasons: (1) you knew, or should have known, the odds when you went into the game; and (2) society can't afford to hand out blanket exemptions from moral responsibility.

Barry remains in office at this writing, but as the initial shock of his arrest wears off, his departure seems

only a matter of time, and of negotiation. In his Sunday homily, surrounded by ministers, he admitted to nothing more specific than "human frailties." A franker admission, like his job, is one of the cards he still holds, to be played later in his dealings with the prosecutors. The U.S. Attorney has hinted that Barry's resignation might be extracted as part of a plea-bargaining package. Perhaps Barry should resign, but not that way. He should not be allowed to trade his resignation for leniency. Prosecuting this Mayor is the U.S. Attorney's duty, but removing him from his position or preventing him from running for re-election to it is not. That's up to Barry himself, or, should he try to hang on, to the voters. And if by some wild mischance they decide to re-elect him—well, that's democracy. Such things have happened before in big cities. Remember Mayor Curley?

It's not likely to happen here, though. Barry has not been an especially beloved figure, and he has been a poor Mayor. The chief beneficiaries of his 11 years in office have been the big downtown developers. The poor and working-class people of Washington's black neighborhoods have fared less well. The murder rate is the highest of any big American city. So is the infant mortality rate. The bureaucracy is downright Soviet in its size and inefficiency. Corruption is widespread, and two Deputy Mayors and six department heads have been among the convicted.

As Mayor, Barry has built his power through a political machine oiled by lavish hiring: the municipal payroll has grown by 10,000 over the past six years, making a total of 50,000 city jobs for a population of 620,000. His popularity, initially based on his youthful service in the civil rights movement, has since the first allegations of drug use six years ago been based increasingly on demagogic defiance of the "white" news media. Barry has never hesitated to blame his troubles on racism, especially the supposed racism of the press. He has encouraged the notion that he is a victim of a "plan" to restore the city to "white" rule. What tends to be forgotten is that when he himself won the 1978 Democratic primary—tantamount to election—he did so with a plurality of barely 35 percent against an all-black field, and most of those votes were white. The most important factor in his victory was the editorial endorsement of the *Washington Post*.

The murmurings of racism by Barry's remaining supporters have found a muted echo in the charge by Benjamin Hooks, executive director of the NAACP, that the Mayor's arrest fits into a pattern of "selective enforcement of the law" against black elected officials. Unless Hooks has some evidence, it's an irresponsible allegation. Can he point to an egregiously lawbreaking white official whom the FBI has ignored? Locally, at least, the opposite appears to be the case. The U.S. Attorney's office in Baltimore stung white Prince George's County Council Member James M. Herl, also on a cocaine charge, just a week before Barry's arrest, making similar use of a female lure. If Justice Department officials were out to "get" Barry, it isn't because

he is black but because they believed his offenses were serious enough and frequent enough to warrant prosecution.

Newsweek described Barry's humiliation as "a stunning blow to black elected officials nationwide." There is no reason why this should be so, any more than the humiliations of Richard Nixon, Spiro Agnew, Gary Hart, and Jim Wright were stunning blows to white elected officials nationwide. Marion Barry was not the first black Mayor of Washington. He will not be the last. And he certainly will not be the best.

FIVE PERCENTERS

Senator Bob Dole's proposal that the United States lop off five percent of its foreign aid to the top five recipients and allow the President to reallocate the funds to "help new democracies" is a novel idea. It is also a dumb one. But in Washington even a foolish novelty will find its constituency. This one has found several. Among them are those who never approved of aiding foreigners in the first place. After all, if dependent but faithful allies like Egypt, Israel, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Turkey—the Dole hit list—can be put to the knife so mindlessly, then the principles behind all foreign aid allocations are in peril. Also to be counted as Dole supporters in this mischievous effort are those who want to cut Congress out of the aid-earmarking process: the devotees of Presidential power, the critics of Congressional "micromanagement" who would prefer to push the legislative branch out of its constitutionally sanctioned role in foreign policy altogether. Each of the five favored allies, moreover, has in the course of time acquired its enemies in the capital; and these, too, from the Greek lobby to the Ferdinand Marcos nostalgics, can be counted as fervent backers of Dole's scheme.

Another constituency reliably in Dole's corner on this issue consists of those whose moral sensibilities are bruised by the very fact that the United States has—dread word—interests. For this group it is an argument for Dole's proposal that his five sacrificial lambs have, as Charles Krauthammer pointed out in the *Washington Post*, "stuck their necks out for the United States." Egypt broke with the Arab hard-liners at Camp David on peace with Israel; Pakistan carried much of the burden of the resistance to the Soviet army in Afghanistan; the Philippines has "consistently permitted the presence of American bases in the face of powerful domestic forces, including well-armed guerrillas, that want them removed"; Turkey, a member of NATO, is "the only Islamic country in formal alliance with the U.S."; Israel's services to U.S. interests (and to U.S. intelligence) have been legion, and mostly unsung. Our relationship with each of these countries has had its more than exasperating moments. But, as Krauthammer asks,

"what kind of message does it send to American allies and adversaries around the world when those countries that identify with the U.S. and its interests are precisely the ones whose aid is cut?"

A message of faithlessness, and also of callousness. All of these countries are deeply, though differently, troubled. Even a five percent cut would be more than a symbolic blow to them. How is Turkey to cope with the recent and costly influx of refugees from Bulgaria and now from Azerbaijan? Egypt has not yet begun to win its battle against overpopulation and the encroaching desert. Pakistan remains the indispensable place of refuge for three million Afghans who have escaped from a war that has not ended. Israel has just begun to welcome the first wave of what may turn out to be 750,000 refugees from populist Russian anti-Semitism. (The economic aid we give to Jerusalem, in any case, goes entirely to service Israel's debt to the United States.) And the Philippines, particularly after the recent coup attempt, needs more, not less, aid. The cuts Dole proposes are trifling from the American perspective; they would, however, be devastating to our friends.

Secretary of State James Baker has refrained from publicly targeting the five, but he too wants to limit help for the emerging democracies of East-Central Europe to whatever can be robbed from the rest of the existing foreign aid budget. He shares Dole's assumption that more help for needy new friends must mean less help for needy old friends.

These men seem no longer to believe that political leadership can be mustered on behalf of the responsibilities America has shouldered and should continue to shoulder in the world. Dole is proud that his proposed reductions would net some \$330 million, which he says is "enough to respond to the needs of new democracies such as Poland, Hungary, and Panama, and countless"—no less—"needy countries." He adds that countries joining in the war on drugs would also be eligible. He thinks this slice of the pie would suffice to "consolidate and expand freedom's gains" and "enhance America's security." It would not, of course, and maybe he senses that himself. So he hints that "an even larger across-the-board cut and reallocation would be warranted." But another five percent, or another ten, would only exacerbate the problems of those countries already hurt on the first round of reductions, while falling far short of meeting America's moral and political obligations to those countries trying freedom as a way of life.

Paltry sums from paltry imaginations. Dole and Baker seem unable to understand that the obligations so shirked are also obligations to ourselves. The present moment in world history is an exhilarating opportunity for the democratic idea, an idea that long-oppressed populations identify with the United States. Too bad that at such a moment the American Administration can't connect this truth with an American imperative to act. It prefers to believe that Gorbachev's troubles relieve us of this imperative.

Many Democrats, and a few Republicans, have suggested that the billions needed for the struggling societies be taken from our defense expenditures in Europe. This proposal, unlike Dole's, is logical: the Soviet military threat in Europe has been dramatically reduced. Five percent of *those* expenditures would yield something in the neighborhood of \$7.5 billion. That is a meaningful sum—one that would begin, but only begin, to address the needs of the societies Dole wants to pacify with the equivalent cost of one B-1 bomber.

HOLY WAR

"The Holy of Holies—the state border of the U.S.S.R.—is being violated," proclaims an appeal to Azerbaijanis and Armenians issued jointly by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, and the Soviet Council of Ministers. That border is indeed being violated, not only in Azerbaijan or the Baltics but, of course, also in the other predominantly Muslim territories of the crumbling Soviet imperium.

It's ironic—and oddly apt—that the Soviet authorities should resort to religious metaphor under these circumstances. For the reality the Kremlin leadership has not been able to face is precisely that its sovereignty and its maps are no longer sacred to millions of its subjects. They have their own primordial loyalties and identities; and though the army may reimpose the center's power by the application of overwhelming force, the empire has long since lost its psychological and moral sway. This is the meaning of the reappearance of old flags and old anthems, and of the massing of millions of peoples to invoke their forgotten histories and rediscovered destinies.

When the history of our period is written, one of its most compelling tales will be the erosion of fear precisely among those people who lived under the most fearful dominion. *Glasnost* surely accelerated the erosion, even encouraged it and made it public. But the dominion of communism, relying ultimately only on its weapons and police, relied on nothing that would motivate the brave or inspire their spirits. Certainly it would not succor fidelity. This is one reason why the Soviet Union, for all its potential nuclear deployments, can no longer be properly called a superpower. Its people are not saddened by the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, and they won't be bereft when some of the so-called autonomous republics go their own way. At the same time, defeat in Afghanistan demystified the supposed omnipotence of Soviet arms. Only last week 100,000 Ukrainians linked hands from Kiev to Lvov demanding independence. In Moldavia, two days later, the same demands. Another result has been the troubles in Azerbaijan. Gorbachev seems not to have antici-

pated the unanimity with which the Azeris reject Soviet rule. Whether the civilian casualties have been in the hundreds or the thousands, they have been fearful.

In other ways too the authorities have reverted to old habits. The Western press has been kept away, and most of the Soviet media, according to Bill Keller of the *New York Times*, deliver propagandistic homilies in place of information. "There is no doubt," however, as Andrei Krainy, of *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, the Young Communist League paper, wrote in a dispatch his editors censored, "that this was an organized shooting of peaceful people." The intervention was meant to put the Azerbaijani nationalists into disarray. Instead, it has brought on the Party the very thing it wanted to bring on its enemies. The tiny Azeri region of Nakhichevan has already seceded. The Azerbaijan parliament itself has raised the threat of independence. Moscow television now hints at negotiations. But in the end, these people, and others, will have to be let free.

Even that, however, will not solve the interethnic and interreligious rivalries that have flared up again in the Transcaucasus. To be sure, totalitarian methods can hide these rivalries, but only temporarily and only by redirecting onto itself the animus that fuels them. And if military rule becomes the pattern in the region, then for this region at best, and for the whole country at worst, the project of *perestroika* will have failed.

The fact is that the Azerbaijanis and Armenians have hated each other for centuries. And they have hurt each other for centuries. It is too simple to say, as our own stereotypes and those of the media have led us to think, that the Muslim Azerbaijanis are the killers and the Armenians the victims. Shiites also suffer, after all, and Christians can and do kill. In the beginning, Fouad Ajami once wrote about another place with like loyalties and like rancors, was the feud. This feud was perfectly preserved in the ice of Soviet rule. Now the ice is melting, and the one sentiment the warring tribes share is their unappeasable grievance against communism. Even the Armenian National Front condemned the armed Soviet intervention and denounced the "violation of the sovereign rights of Azerbaijan." The attack on Baku, the Armenians charged, was "not to guarantee the safety of Armenians but because Soviet power was threatened." This is an irony Gorbachev will not appreciate.

NOTEBOOK

NEW HONG KONG SONG: A smattering of applause is due Margaret Thatcher for changing her mind on Hong Kong. The British prime minister now supports a plan to grant 225,000 of the queen's subjects the right to live in the U.K. when the Crown Colony reverts to Chinese hands in 1997. This proposal has spawned a revolt by the predictable Tory xenophobes, led by former party chairman Norman Tebbit, who argue, in essence, that any is too many. As one Conservative MP put

it, "We don't want a single one of them in." Thatcher's notion, however, is not to provoke a Chinese exodus into Britain but to prevent one. Since Tiananmen Square, Hong Kong's citizens have redoubled their efforts to procure passports from free countries, and many have already left in anticipation of the turnover. With the offer of sanctuary in Britain, they will wait and see what China does. If the Chinese uphold the democratic guarantees contained in the 1984 Joint Declaration, Hong Kong's citizens will stay put. But if Beijing breaks its pledge, they will have the option of voting with their feet. The threat of flight in turn provides China with a strong incentive to keep its word about self-rule: without its human and financial capital, the economic engine of Hong Kong is worthless to the mainland. The Labour Party in Britain uses this logic to argue that all 5.7 million of Hong Kong's British passport-holders deserve the right of abode. Noble though it sounds, the promise would be a hollow one: there is no way a country of Britain's size can absorb six million refugees. Such an offer makes sense only if it is not accepted. But for a standing ovation, Thatcher should up her bid by a few hundred thousand, and denounce the nativist demagoguery in her ranks.

TERMINATOR'S CLEARINGHOUSE: Thanks to last year's federal ban, you can't win any imported assault rifles in the National Rifle Association's 1990 World-O'-Guns Sweepstakes, but there are plenty of other fabulous prizes: \$50,000 worth of Colt Pythons, Beretta 92Fs, Smith & Wessons, Brownings, Remingtons, and more. Plus ten contestants will win \$100 worth of ammo each. If the mail giveaway is a success, perhaps the NRA will try the TV game show format: something like "Lethal Jeopardy" or "Barrel of Fortune" might do wonders for its image. You can almost hear Don Pardo's voice-over now: Our lucky winner will be packing serious heat with a NEW GLOCK 17. This plastic pistol fits easily into your handbag or attaché case, and makes airport security almost hassle-free!

DO TELL: Ever since Ronald Reagan proposed the Strategic Defensive Initiative, its advocates have had one highly prized p.r. asset: Edward Teller. Star Wars may sound like a crazy idea, they say, but it's backed by Teller, and he, after all, is the "father of the hydrogen bomb." It now looks as if this phrase is something of an exaggeration. Several new revisionist accounts of the bomb's invention suggest that Teller's role, though significant, is rivaled, and perhaps overshadowed, by that of Stanislaw M. Ulam, the great mathematician. This finding has been obscured by the more dramatic news to emerge from the revisionism: according to the January issue of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, the hydrogen bomb secrets stolen by the notorious Soviet spy Klaus Fuchs probably weren't of much use to the Soviet bomb project, and may even have impeded it. But if you read the stories about Fuchs carefully—either the *Bulletin*

article or William Broad's summary in the January 3 *New York Times*—you'll see that the news about Fuchs, too, reflects badly on Teller. The information Fuchs snatched in 1946 pertained to the "classical Super" hydrogen bomb, the version then championed by Teller. But in 1950, thanks largely to Ulam's work, it became clear that the classical Super was unworkable. Teller's enthusiasm for it had rested on incomplete calculations, and only with Ulam's subsequent guidance was the United States able to develop a functioning bomb. In the meantime, though, Teller's inadequate understanding of the subject hadn't kept him from convincing just about everyone—including Fuchs, perhaps, and certainly Harry Truman—that the doomed classical Super was worth pursuing. Sound familiar?

GOOD GUY GONE: Joseph S. Clark, who died the other day at the age of 88, was an old-fashioned good-government patrician progressive. As Mayor of Philadelphia in the early 1950s, he transformed one of the most corrupt of American cities into one of the cleanest and best run. As a U.S. Senator from 1957 to 1969 he was part of the glittering group of liberal Democrats who helped lay the foundations for the social and civil rights gains of the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations. In a witty article for TNR in 1969, he parodied a *Wall Street Journal* editorial that asserted, "Private spending comes from the money individuals are able to accumulate through their own work." To this Clark appended, "It may also come, as it did in my case, from selecting ancestors who thought they were developing a sugar plantation but turned out to be squatting on top of a salt dome surrounded by a rich oil pool." Joe Clark had a social conscience, no bad thing. R.I.P.

CORRECTION: Apologies to CBS correspondent Wyatt Andrews, who was mistakenly identified as Wyatt Stewart in last week's White House Watch. •

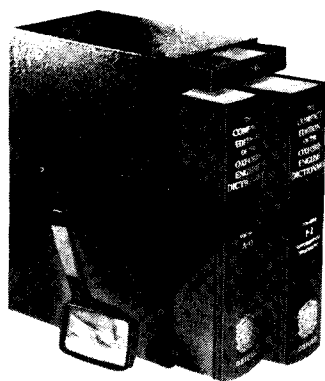
Political gymnasts go for the gold.

ABORTION OLYMPICS

By Jacob Weisberg

Abortion is a fine test of a politician's skill. Because it is a question of conscience with two clear, opposing positions, there's hardly a hedge to hide behind. Basically, you're on one side or the other. Even George Bush hasn't found a good way to split the difference on this one

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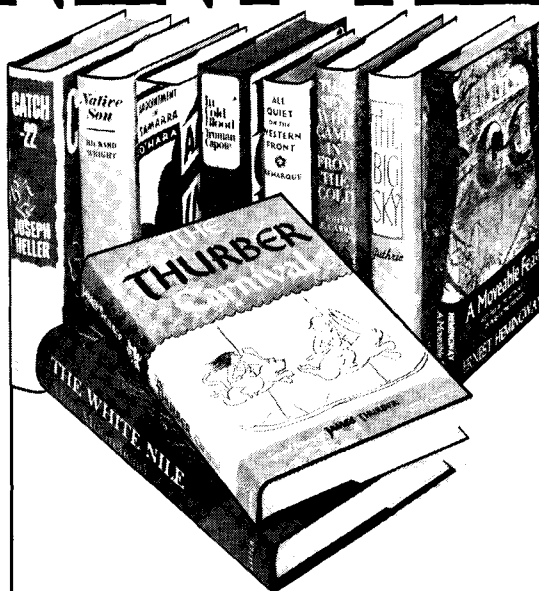
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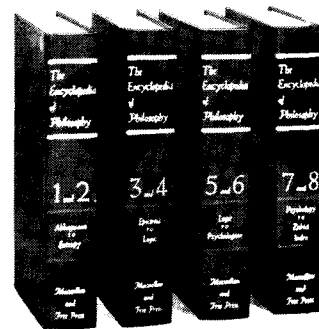
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yet. But every candidate knows that as soon as you pick a side, you engender a brood of implacable foes who will stop at nothing to defeat you.

Back when the right to abortion remained pre-emptively secure under *Roe v. Wade*, a quiet anti-abortion stance seemed the safest bet to many candidates. Since *Webster*, however, with the reproductive rights lobby mobilized and the pro-life line suddenly passé, passive pro-choice seems the shrewder stance in most states. But the search for the perfect pose continues. Herewith, a guide to the season's most popular moves:

The Mario Cuomo Freestyle: By cultivating his reputation as a troubled man of conscience, searching his soul for guidance on this deeply complex, profoundly painful issue, Cuomo eludes the flak that ordinary politicians catch for trying to have it both ways. With his trademark bows in the direction of Aquinas, Moore, and Galileo, Cuomo frequently introduces new subtleties and microscopic adjustments to the already vexed position that he believes abortion wrong but that a woman should have the right to choose. The Governor, who's up for reelection this year, is the Dorothy Hamill of abortion figure skating, whose perfect political "10" is a benchmark for candidates who hope to glide smoothly over the issue's thin ice. He has many imitators but no equals.

Lately, however, the champ has been running into trouble. When he tried mincing new distinctions about abortion in early January, the *New York Times* headlined its story "CUOMO'S REMARKS ON ABORTION CONFUSE BOTH SIDES." In a section of his January State of the State message, Cuomo advocated abstinence, contraception, and adoption in place of what he called the "tragedy" of abortion, but also seemed to endorse "pro-chastity" programs that do not condone contraception. As pro-life state Senator James H. Donovan told the *New York Times*, "To me, there's a contradiction in there somewhere. You and I probably couldn't get away with it, but the Governor has this way of being able to say a lot of things at the same time." *TNR judges' composite score: 9.6.*

The Silber Straddle: Newcomer John Silber won high marks for originality when he performed a complex floor exercise in his debut as a Democratic (for the moment) candidate for the Massachusetts Governorship. In a *Times* op-ed headlined "DON'T ROLL BACK 'ROE'" (which could just as accurately have been titled "Roll Back 'Roe'"), Silber maintained that he was neither pro-life nor pro-choice. Abortion is "homicide," but in certain cases it is analogous to "justifiable homicide." At this point Silber became confused and tripped over a pommel horse. Justifiable homicides take place in self-defense or in war. If the fetus is a human being, he or she is by definition an innocent noncombatant. But the energetic moral philosopher from Boston University did not lose heart. He jumped back up and resumed his routine. States should have every right to restrict abortions, but they

oughtn't to restrict them—more than they already have, that is. "This is an issue that cries out for toleration," he wrote. Did he mean obfuscation? *Composite score: 4.2.*

The Gephardt Backstroke: Currently the most popular style in speed swimming, it gets its name from the Missouri Representative who wowed spectators during the 1988 Presidential Games with his world record in the 100-meter Iowa event. Gephardt, who supported a constitutional amendment banning abortion as he dived from the block, was pro-choice by the time he reached the end of the pool. (He explained his achievement by saying that although he remains personally opposed to abortion, efforts to ban it "weren't going anywhere.") The technique is now favored by both parties. Republican Dave Emery, who is running to recapture his old congressional seat from Maine, has used it to good effect in the state championships. Despite his down-the-line pro-life voting record when he was in Congress from 1975 to 1983, including co-sponsorship of the "Constitutional Human Life Amendment," he unhesitatingly swam to support publicly funded abortions last month, pre-empting a primary challenge based on the choice issue. "I would strongly argue that what I owe the public most of all is intellectual honesty. I make no apology whatsoever for the fact that the learning and growing process of time . . . has brought me to a different conclusion than I would have held a decade ago," he said, according to *The Abortion Report*. Steroids are suspected. *Composite score: 6.6.*

The Schaefer Slalom: Named for Maryland's William Donald Schaefer, the snow-spraying Governor who says there is "no room to fudge" on the issue of abortion but refuses to own up to what his position is. Though he promised to extend state funding for poor women seeking abortions when he first made the jump from Baltimore's City Hall to Annapolis in 1987, Schaefer never acted. He has been skiing downhill ever since, hinting that he has personal qualms about abortion but otherwise offering no clues. Schaefer may attempt a Cuomo later this year, but with the Maryland General Assembly bitterly divided, he isn't likely to try anything dramatic. "I will take a stand when I'm ready. Not when the press wants me to," he said recently. *Composite score: 7.0.*

The Mormon Liff: This pole vault technique recognizes the achievement of the elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who adjust doctrine according to spectacular leaps of divine revelation. (One such revelation instructed the Church fathers to scrap the doctrine of plural marriage soon after the U.S. Supreme Court voided it in 1878.) Anthony Celebrezze, the Democratic attorney general of Ohio, performed a stunning Mormon in the Midwestern regional trials, when he propelled himself from an "abortion is murder" position clear over to support for Medicaid abortions ten days before declaring as a candidate for Governor. "We must allow the women of Ohio to make their own decisions on abortion,"

he said. "I believe Ohio cannot turn the clock back 20 years on the question of abortion." Amazingly, Celibrezze landed on his feet. As a concluding flourish he brazened out charges of opportunism, denying that political reasons had *anything* to do with his switch or the timing of his announcement. *Composite Score: 9.1 (Silver Medal).*

The Hartigan Plunge: Illinois Attorney General Neil Hartigan blew away the competition with this contortion off the springboard in late 1989. On the verge of a Supreme Court hearing on an Illinois law intended to regulate abortion clinics out of existence, Hartigan—who transformed himself from a pro-lifer into a pro-choicer in time to run for Governor—settled the case out of court to the satisfaction of the clinics and the ACLU. Hartigan executed this somersault with great poise despite its high degree of difficulty. Points off for touching the bottom of the pool. *Composite score 8.4.*

The John Brock Headlock: The heartbreak of the quarterfinals in Greco-Roman wrestling was the round in which Kentucky Democratic Senate candidate John Brock attempted this grip on himself. Explicating his position, Brock told reporters he was personally opposed to abortion, but that he also opposed overturning *Roe v. Wade*. He stipulated that he *opposed* Medicaid abortions, except to save the mother's life. "I have to represent Kentuckians in Washington if I'm elected—not necessarily the views of John Brock all the time." He seemed headed for victory. But then something happened: Brock lost his grasp. "That's not a final statement on it," he said as he collapsed on the mat. "That's where I'm leaning at this time." *Disqualification.*

The Coleman Centrifuge: Brock's collapse recalled Marshall Coleman's tragic injury in the finals of the 16-lb. hammer throw during the 1989 Virginia Open. Once pro-choice, Coleman said he became pro-life when he found out how many abortions were taking place after the Supreme Court decided *Roe v. Wade* in 1973 (a few hundred thousand murders are fine, but if you're talking about millions, hey, wait a minute). When that didn't wash, Coleman spun around again, saying further restrictions on abortion just weren't going to pass in Virginia. When asked whether he'd sign such legislation if it did pass, the dizzy Coleman bonged the iron into his head, handing Doug Wilder a bye. *Forfeiture.*

The Miller Two-in-One: This virtuoso maneuver is synonymous with the name of Iowa decathlete Tom Miller, who leads the field for the state's Democratic Gubernatorial nomination. A Catholic who has long favored a constitutional amendment to ban abortion, Miller now says that if he's elected he won't push any restrictions except parental notification. His argument is that so long as *Roe* was in effect, he never had to confront the hard reality of actually prohibiting abortions. Now, though he remains personally opposed, he has realized that the issue is too divisive. Some suggest that though Miller is stressing his

opposition to restrictions while he runs against Democrats, he'll remind voters of his deeply held personal opposition to abortion once again when he faces Republican Terry Branstad in the November finals. If Miller pulls this off, he'll rate a 10 for sure, with an inside shot at the Gold Medal. But the race is his to lose. •

Will the real revolution now begin?

STASI BESIEGED

By Robert Darnton

BERLIN

Was January 15 another storming of the Bastille? The images left over from the bicentennial celebrations of the French Revolution are fresh enough for one to see it that way, but January 15 was no July 14 for the East Berliners. The crowd that stormed the headquarters of the Stasi in the Ruchestrasse did not bring down a regime or string up any victims. It went on a romp, kicking through doorways and trashing furniture. Worse has occurred in American college panty raids, not to mention English soccer games.

But the East German government was shaken to its core. In a nationwide appeal, broadcast over television and radio, it sounded as though the country were on the brink of civil war. "The democracy that is just beginning to develop is in great danger," the statement warned. "The government of the German Democratic Republic appeals to all citizens in this critical hour to stay calm and collected." The government and the opposition parties broke off their negotiations at the Round Table, which is setting the political agenda until the May elections, and Prime Minister Hans Modrow rushed off to the Ruchestrasse as if he were determined not to botch things in the style of Louis XVI. "Is this a riot?" the king reportedly said on July 15, 1789. "No sire, a revolution," was the famous reply. Modrow seems to have feared a revolution and to have found a riot.

But his fears were not completely groundless. The first round of price increases—children's clothing, up 50 percent to 150 percent—had just taken place, producing mob scenes in department stores. The first important strike—a 24-hour stoppage by milk deliverers in Berlin—had just been announced. Immigration to West Germany continued unabated at a rate of more than 1,000 persons a day. And above all, the political situation began to boil.

Since the first of the year Modrow's government had made it clear that it meant to govern. It announced new measures without consulting the 16 opposition groups

gathered at the Round Table. It refused the opposition parties' demands for equal access to offices, telephones, printing presses, automobiles, and television time, which have all been monopolized by the Communist (SED) Party. It rejected demands for a law on joint ventures, which would permit foreign firms to acquire controlling interests in East German enterprises. And it refused to budge on the Stasi issue.

The Stasi occupy a key place in the new political consciousness of the East Germans. In a lecture tour of university towns in the GDR from January 11 to 17, I found the obsession with the Stasi to be as pervasive as the push for unification. Every city has its Stasi citadel, a bastion surrounded by walls and covered with a forest of radio antennas. Every citizen has a collection of Stasi stories, which explain why he was not promoted or allowed to travel or admitted to an educational institution. A Stasi mythology about tapped telephones, steamed-open letters, and denunciations by domestic spies has spread throughout the country.

How much truth is there to it? No one could say before last November, when the Stasi stations were occupied by demonstrators and placed under the surveillance of Citizens' Committees. After a quick look through the secret files, mainly their own, committee members decided to keep the files sealed. To release the information, they announced, would be to set off endless feuds among people who had been denounced by their neighbors or betrayed by their spouses. Since the government had promised that the Stasi would be disbanded, it seemed that the myth could be allowed to dissipate in tavern talk.

But in December the government mounted a campaign for the suppression of neo-fascism, and the political spectrum began to change. Some Nazi-like graffiti had appeared on walls; some anti-Semitic remarks had been overheard in pubs; some Soviet memorials had been defaced; and a strong nationalistic current had surfaced in the opposition demonstrations, which have continued to take place in many cities, especially Leipzig.

How serious is this danger? The first alarm came from the opposition groups—a poorly organized and badly splintered coalition of parties and civic organizations that have only one thing in common: hostility to the SED. Nationalists had shouted down some New Forum speakers in the Leipzig demonstration of December 11, and it looked as though a new right might attempt to seize the anti-government movement from the hands of the new left, capitalizing on popular pressure for union with West Germany.

By early January, however, most of the left opposition groups, New Forum included, had endorsed unification in some form or other, usually with guarantees of the current borders and a proviso for the sanction of the major powers. Flag-waving is no longer a monopoly of the right, and the flag one sees everywhere—in demonstrations and even draped from apartment windows—is the flag of the Federal Republic. As East German intel-

lectuals now describe it, neo-Nazism amounts to little more than spray-painting by teenagers, who get the greatest possible shock value in their protest against the regime by playing with the most powerful taboos in the regime's official culture: the symbols and slogans from the Hitler period. There is nothing except frustration behind the occasional swastika on the wall—no broad public support, no party, no Führer. The far right does not exist as an organized force essentially because the government has not permitted the radical Republican Party from West Germany to establish a foothold in the East.

The lack of dominant personalities, in the government as well as the opposition, makes East German politics look very different from those of Poland and Czechoslovakia, where personality cults have formed around Lech Walesa and Vaclav Havel. Gregor Gysi, the new leader of the SED, looks and sounds like an intellectual. As a defense lawyer, he developed a strong record of defending dissidents. And as Party secretary, he is known for his wit. He may be the only politician in either Germany with a sense of humor. No one could be less like a Hitler or a Stalin.

Yet the most common graffiti and demonstration banners now say things like "Gysi-Stasi-Nasi" and "GyStasi." Instead of playing with neo-nationalism, the opposition is trying to brand the regime with the charge of "Stasinismus," i.e., with attempting to reconstruct a police state. It began whipping up Stasi-consciousness, and in doing so it provided the spark that set off the riot of January 15.

The opposition groups adopted this strategy in response to a government line, which went roughly as follows: neo-fascism is a genuine threat; the public should rally to the government's struggle against it; to win the struggle, the government will have to take strong measures; and strong measures can only be effective by means of a security police, or "*Verfassungsschutz*" (constitution protection), in the language of the SED. To the opposition groups sitting at the Round Table, constitution-protecting sounded suspiciously like Stasi-reviving, all the more so as the promised liquidation of the Stasi seemed to have come to a halt. Was the danger of neo-fascism a bluff, used to cover up the creation of a new police state while the SED maintained its monopoly on the media and the means required to run a political campaign? As soon as the government sponsored the idea of the danger, the public began to disbelieve it: such is the state of confidence in public authority in the GDR.

On January 8 the opposition groups delivered an ultimatum to the government: either Modrow would inform them about the state of the Stasi—the number of agents, their activities, and the progress of their dissolution—or they would break off all negotiations, producing political chaos only four months before the general election. Modrow had tried to keep his distance from the Round Table, arguing that he had to concentrate on governing the country and that he reported to

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parliament—that is, the old Volkskammer, where there is no real opposition to the SED. But when faced with the ultimatum, he caved in.

On January 15, the morning before the riot, he appeared before the Round Table and asked to make peace. He promised to abandon all plans for establishing a new security force before the elections, and he asked his main adviser, Manfred Sauer, to report on the Stasi. Sauer's report was astonishing, even to those with a highly developed Stasi-consciousness. The force consisted of 85,000 regular employees, of whom only 30,000 had been dismissed; it also included 109,000 secret informers. That is, one of every 80 persons in the country, whose population is about 16 million, worked for the Stasi. The surveillance involved 1,052 full-time specialists who tapped telephones, 2,100 who steamed open letters, and 5,000 who followed suspects. The force had doubled since 1980 and had set as its goal the

perfection of an espionage network that would cover every citizen in the GDR.

The Stasi armory included 200,000 pistols, which were being turned over to the Ministry of the Interior; a huge fleet of cars, which would be sold to the public (the waiting time for a car is 15 years); and 3,000 telephone lines, which would be integrated into the public phone system (only one of every three households has a telephone). In short, the Sauer report confirmed the wildest fantasies of the Stasi alarmists. The hundreds of Stasi officers collectively constituted a forbidden city, with its own barbers and grocers and sports facilities as well as an information apparatus that could reach into everyone's life and that no one from the outside had ever penetrated—not until January 15, 1990.

At 5 p.m. that afternoon, a crowd of about 100,000 gathered at the central Stasi office in Berlin for a demonstration organized by New Forum under the slogan

Crossings

The destruction of the Berlin Wall, seen on television around the globe, resembled a riotous, dancing, Broadway spectacular full of fun and joy. The piercing in many places of the double lines of steel fencing, barbed wire, and concrete wall along the 188 miles of the border between East and West Germany patrolled by the U.S. 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment produced for me totally different emotions. This stretch of the inner-German border reaches from the edge of Bavaria in the south to the British zone in the north. It is a section relatively untouched by development, dotted with small farming villages connected by narrow roads that twist through the densely wooded hills.

In this rural world the openings were made largely out of sight of news organizations and without world leaders present. At most of these new crossing points one saw not the young dancing and partying but older people who came with tears. Many were parts of families separated for years, who either had not seen each other or had caught only an occasional glimpse through field glasses, and who now strolled quietly back and forth across the border. As they did so they passed crosses, freshly wreathed for Christmas, which commemorated those killed trying to escape across the Wall before East Germany opened its borders, on November 9. (Treason is once more a question of

dates.) These people came to shop, certainly; they bought a lot of fruit and Christmas cards. But they also brought with them pictures of grandchildren never seen, or groups of relatives. At these openings what came to me was not joy, but Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey*:

But hearing often times
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of
ample power
To chasten and subdue.

On November 8 along this 188 miles of border there were only two openings. These had been there since the fences and walls went up more than 40 years ago. Both were heavily guarded by East German troops and border police. There were runs for patrol dogs; crossings could take hours. Then on the 9th parts of this world changed. Two months later, when I surveyed this portion of the frontier—which includes the famed invasion route, the Fulda Gap—there were 32 border crossings with checks, if they existed at all, taking minutes. Yet such was the unplanned and topsy-turvy nature of this "revolution" that even as East and West German border police were helping each other to open up some sections of the Wall, in other areas the East German border guards were still building watchtowers and taking pictures of West German watchers. To someone peering from the West or talking to the green-uniformed East German border police in the friendly sections, it appeared that the government of Communist Germany had

truly broken down, leaving each tiny section of the Wall to do as it pleased.

In some sections of the frontier the openings had been made by East Germans alone. Some of these are bicycle paths, some mere footpaths through the pines and birches, others are motor roads. At other border points the steel fences had been taken down by West Germans while those in the East merely watched. In the town of Rasdorf the West German townspeople, annoyed that they had to travel a good half-hour to cross the border, held an all-night candlelight vigil at their portion of the ten-foot-high steel fence right after Christmas. The East German border guards stared right back. Finally at about dawn the guards began to take down the line of fencing that was closer to the East. The candle-holders surged forward and dismantled the fence closer to their side of the border. A few days later outside of Rasdorf a new route sign appeared. It was painted yellow and bore the county markings like many other road signs in West Germany. But this one bore a heretofore impossible name, Bad Salzungen, the nearest large town on the other side of the old Wall.

For centuries the twin towns of Philippstal and Vacha had been one town lying on each side of the tiny Werra River, connected by an ancient red stone bridge. There was one high school for both towns; children played together; families

"Imagination against Stasi and Nasi [sic]." The Sauer report made it unnecessary for them to use their imagination. Shouting "We are the people," they climbed a wall, forced open a door, and went on a rampage. They smashed furniture, urinated against walls, and painted graffiti such as "Never again Stasi" and "Down with the SED."

The damage was actually far less than the million marks announced by the government, but far more, psychologically, than the government can afford. For the first time since the beginning of their revolution, the Germans have resorted to violence. They have sacked the most feared fortress in the land, before television cameras, which carried the scene into households everywhere. They have stripped the secrecy off the old police state and shown it for what it was, an insidious network of corruption and denunciation woven into the core of the Communist Party. And they

have transformed the political situation by exposing the Party's fragile hold on power.

"WHO RULES THIS COUNTRY TODAY?" was the headline on the Party newspaper in Halle on June 16. Modrow and the ministers? The Round Table? Or nobody? East Germany is drifting into dangerous waters, but this first shot of violence seems to have charged people with new energy. "Germans are supposed to obey orders, not to defy them," a young man in Halle explained. He cited the old saw: There will never be a revolution in Germany, because before storming the train stations the Germans will queue up to buy platform tickets. "We are having a revolution," he said proudly. "And we have stormed the Stasi."

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farmed the hillside fields together and intermarried. Then the Wall went up, high concrete here, not a mere iron fence. The vagaries of the border were such that the Wall ran right down the center of the bridge and right through the house at the bridge's western end. One half of the house, now painted white, ended up in the East, its gutter discharging into the East. The other half of the house, now painted brown, empties into the West.

On November 11 the faces of some East German guards peered over the stone and concrete from the Vacha side. Could the people of Philippstal lend them some heavy equipment to help tear down the Wall? The bridge is now unvalled; the house is no longer divided.

After the first of January the great ugly green fence with probes and spikes that hung from the bridge to prevent people from escaping from East Germany by swimming down the Werra River was raised. It hung cold and dry above the water, its hidden teeth that had scraped the bottom, on which several would-be escapees had died, gaped open, the upper jaw of some recently dangerous dragon.

Although it is still impossible for Americans to enter East Germany (as distinct from East Berlin) without an elaborate visa application that can take months, the Communist border guards were friendly. A uniformed American paratroop colonel and I strolled over to talk to them. What was the purpose, we wanted to know,

of what appeared to be a telephone cable being strung from East to West across the recently opened bridge? The East German border police explained that it was a telephone cable being laid so they could talk directly to their colleagues in the West to speed the flow of traffic and help with mutual problems.

Some 20 miles further north at the town of Herleshausen the West Germans have moved heavy road-building equipment into East Germany to help repair the road in the East so more people can cross. At one point shortly before Christmas the little cars of East Germany, the two-cylinder Trabis and slightly larger Wartbergs, had backed up on stretches of East Germany's inadequate road system for 25 miles. (The Trabis, which burn a mixture of oil and gasoline, break down so often that a West German joke has it that their engine hood is connected to the ignition switch. Every time the car is stopped the hood pops open to facilitate repairs.)

There is a point to describing all this activity away from the TV cameras and the stories of children baffled by their first sights of bananas and oranges. And it relates directly to the lines of Wordsworth. At these out-of-the-way crossing points one feels the cumulative power of the human drive toward German unification. The Germans never say reunification, believing they have never truly been divided. "Humanity," "the little people," "*der kleine Mann*" have decided this issue. Mitterrand, Kohl, Thatcher, Gorbachev, Bush, East Germany's Communist leaders,

journalists, the Great Ones of the World can all have their say. They can influence, somewhat, the shape of the result. Perhaps one or two of them can even delay the process—but at tremendous cost, and it will start up again. At these crossing points there is no extravaganza, no wild cries of joy, no simple thirst for material goods, but a deep need to be one country that transcends fears on both sides over the final outcome.

A few hours' drive north of here during World War II, I helped liberate a major concentration camp, Magdeburg; another half-hour's drive further is the place I was wounded. I have been covering maneuvers around this area since the start of NATO. Today is a typical German winter day. The weather has not changed from 1944 to 1990: some snow on the ground, ice coating the tree limbs, misty, unpleasantly cold and damp. I find it hard, even after hours of looking at people peacefully crossing the border, to believe what I am seeing. As I start away from Philippstal/Vacha, a young couple, hand in hand in the gathering dark, walk toward the bridge. They have stepped right out of Hardy's "In Time of a Breaking of Nations":

Yonder a maid and her wight
Come whispering by:
War's annals will cloud into night
Ere their story die.

ARTHUR T. HADLEY

Arthur T. Hadley writes frequently on political military affairs.

THE FOX AND THE HEDGEHOG

By Gustavo Gorriti

LIMA, PERU

Back in the 1970s Mario Vargas Llosa loved Isaiah Berlin's famous classification of thinkers and artists, the one Berlin borrowed from a fragment of a poem by Archilocus of Paros: "The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing." Foxes have a diverse vision of life. They are skeptics, agnostics, tolerant, centrifugal. Hedgehogs have a central, systematic vision of life. They are believers, doers, committed, centripetal, often fanatical. Aristotle, Shakespeare, Balzac, and Joyce were foxes. Plato, Marx, Dostoyevsky, Lenin, and Freud were hedgehogs. Certain moments in history allow foxes to prosper. They tend, however, to be rare.

As things now look in Peru, foxes may be in danger of extinction. This year's presidential election will be only a prelude for the ultimate contest for power between two bristling hedgehogs: the writer Vargas Llosa, who leads all voters' polls by a very wide margin and will probably be Peru's next president; and the philosopher-warrior Abimael Guzmán, who leads the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) insurgency. The contest will be decided not by elections but by internal war, which has been steadily growing in scope and intensity since 1980.

Both are complex, uncommon leaders of a dimension rarely seen in Latin America. Vargas Llosa will, of course, represent elected, democratic legitimacy, however imperfect this may be in a Third World context. He will try to be the Latin equivalent of Margaret Thatcher, whipping into shape a depressed, hyperinflation-ravaged economy. Guzmán claims, improbably, to act in accordance with the laws of history, and considers Mao's Cultural Revolution to be humankind's most splendid moment, except that it wasn't radical enough.

Only a year ago this confrontation of polarities would have been seen as highly unlikely. With the possible exception of President Fernando Belaunde's 1980-85 government, Peru has had left-leaning regimes since 1968, either de facto or elected. The legal Marxist left is the most important in South America and has been the second-strongest electoral force in Peru since the 1985 general elections. It has a sizable representation in parliament and controls the trade union movement and

.....
GUSTAVO GORRITI, a Peruvian-born journalist, has just completed a book about the Shining Path guerrillas.

many city governments throughout Peru. Yet in the past several months, Vargas Llosa and Guzmán have both gained momentum, and what stands between them has dwindled to irrelevance.

Among the marginalized is President Alan García, whose unprecedented popularity from 1985 to '87 is matched only by his unprecedented unpopularity since 1988. After the failure of Belaunde's grandfatherly regime, which seemed to be in a permanent state of low-intensity chaos, Peruvians were mesmerized by what appeared to be García's new style of politics: post-adolescent activism combined with good looks and an operatic approach to public life. García, an ardent admirer of the great tenor Luciano Pavarotti, enthralled Peruvians with charismatic rhetoric (often delivered from the balcony of the Palacio de Gobierno), dramatic gestures, and the Byzantine, back-stabbing way he dealt with his own government. It was politics as performing arts, and for a couple of years Peruvians loved it. (In fact, it is an old-fashioned trademark of Latin American populism. As five-time Ecuadoran President Jose Maria Velasco Ibarra used to say, "Give me a balcony, and I'll become president.")

Like most captive audiences, Peruvians were even willing to overlook the plot's inconsistencies. On the first day of his presidency, for example, García announced that he was cutting his already modest salary in half. Yet soon thereafter he moved from his modest apartment to an attractive residence in the better part of Lima, and he kept prospering, despite his cut in pay. An opposition member of Parliament, Fernando Olivera, undertook a dogged investigation of García's financial affairs and those of the group of young intriguers within his APRA Party, who made up a large part of the government. For a long time Olivera was viciously ridiculed in spite of finding several instances of government corruption at the presidential level. But as García's popularity dwindled, Olivera's findings were taken more seriously. Now he is feared, and very popular.

During García's first two years in office, Peru's economy appeared to prosper in much the same way he did. Fueled by intense deficit spending, Peru's GNP grew by 9.5 percent during the first year of his government and by 7.8 percent the second. But by the end of 1987 Peru had plunged into its worst peacetime recession. In 1988

GNP fell by 8.8 percent, and last year it fell by at least 15 percent. The inflation rate in 1989 was 2,600 percent, one of the highest in the world.

With the aggravation of the economic crises, the country became ever more seriously addicted to the income from illegal cocaine exports. Legal exports in 1988 were \$2.7 billion; total cocaine exports might be as high as \$1.5 billion. García is blamed for the economic disaster. "There were no objective reasons for this to happen, and it did only because of his persistently dictatorial mismanagement of the economy," says Augusto Alvarez, editor of the prestigious magazines *Perú Económico* and *Semana Económica*.

More dangerous in the long run is the Shining Path insurgency. Once regarded as a lunatic fringe of the left, the ultra-orthodox Communist Party of Peru (the real name of the Shining Path) has successfully followed a Maoist "People's War" strategy combined with old Comintern insurrectionary doctrine. Its strategy has little in common with the Latin American guerrilla tradition and is better compared to the Chinese and Vietnamese insurgencies. The Shining Path would have been a formidable enemy under the best of circumstances, and its progress has been made easier by the often brutal clumsiness with which the government and the military have tried to stem it. Their tactics have ranged from fantasies of reconciliation between revolutionary cousins (between the 1930s and the 1950s the APRA Party was mostly underground) to frightful excesses in repression (including the military operations to quell prison mutinies in June 1986, in which more than 300 were killed).

Nowadays García's hold over Peruvian politics is regarded as a ruinous addiction that Peruvians can ill afford, and many are turning to Vargas Llosa for help. In Latin America, as in Eastern Europe and Russia, writers and artists have long been regarded as wise men, capable of an intelligent approach to public affairs, a sensitivity toward people, and the kind of moral honesty that literary creation is believed to require. Vargas Llosa, the

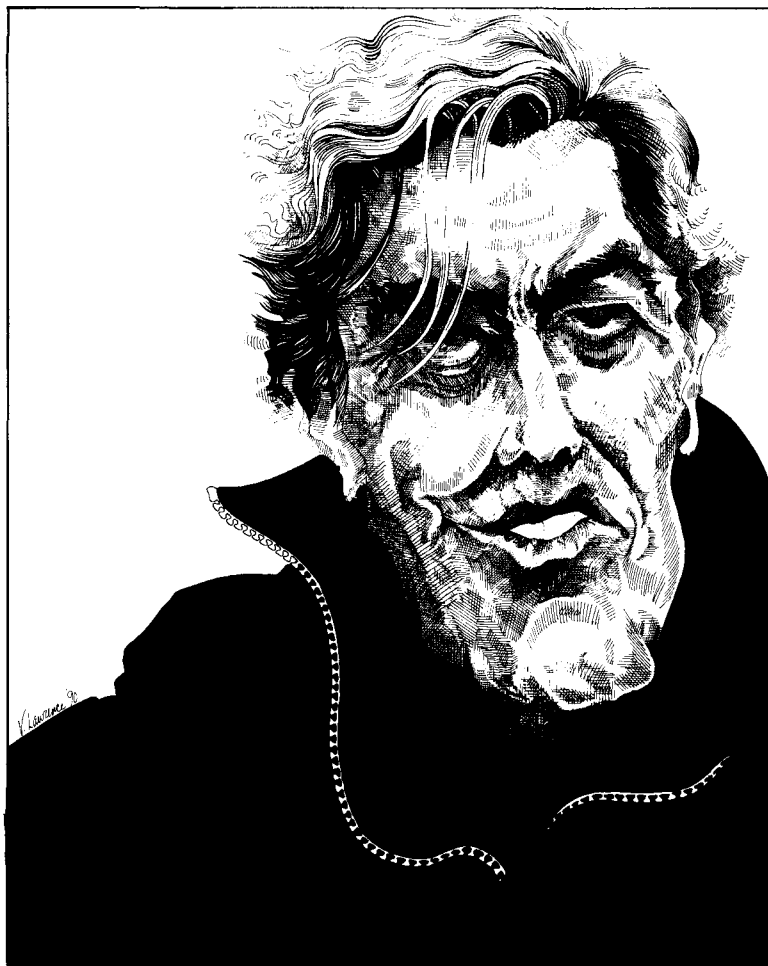
author of such remarkable novels as *Conversations in the Cathedral* and *The War of the End of the World*, is also a rigorous thinker whose literary, philosophical, and political essays are tightly reasoned. And he is becoming a polished politician whose vision of grass-roots capitalism and a market-oriented revolution is persuasively, elegantly argued. Vargas Llosa promises to diminish radically the size of the state, drastically cutting back government regulation and streamlining the budget. He says he will cut the 2,600 percent hyperinflation to less than ten percent during his first year in office.

Yet his gift for clear expression is deceptive. It underlies a complex and stormy process of change. His current stage is a relatively recent development in a long evolution. You can classify Vargas Llosa's politics roughly by decade: he was a revolutionary during the '60s, a social democrat through the '70s, and a Thatcherite in the '80s.

During the early '60s the Paris-based Vargas Llosa identified both with the heretical communism of Jean-Paul Sartre and with the Cuban revolution. Like Sartre, he deplored the crimes of Stalinism but upheld communism as the only true model for social justice. The revolutionary illusion, so widespread then, was espoused by the young writer in his peculiarly vehement style in newspaper articles, manifestos, and

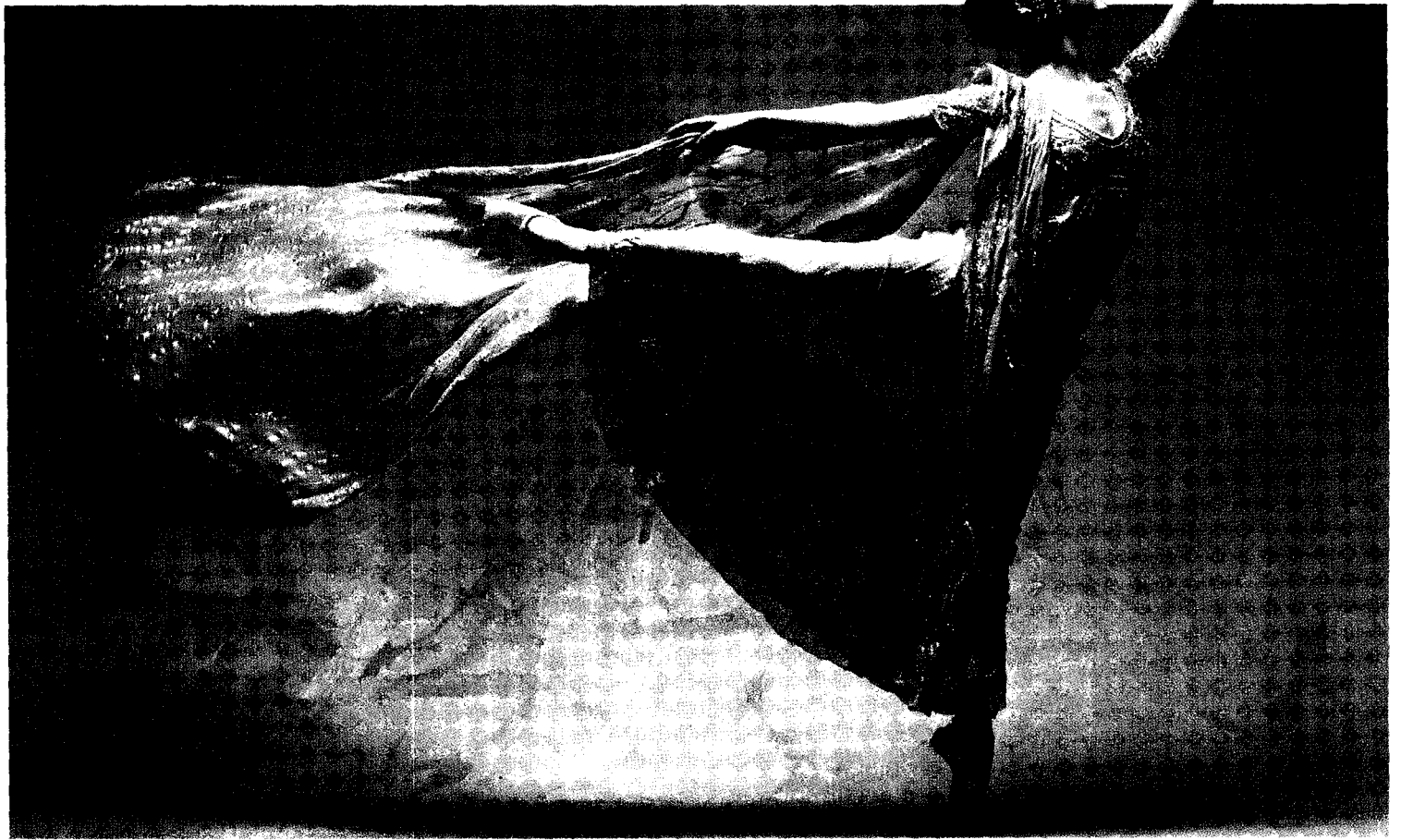
visits to Cuba. Liberal democracy was a fallacy; political freedom under conditions of unequal income distribution was "a subtle lie"; and even the freest electoral processes could turn, by an "invisible alchemy," into an "empty ceremony." When a Cuban-inspired guerrilla outbreak began in Peru in mid-1965, Vargas Llosa drafted a manifesto, signed by several other writers, stating that under present conditions, "There isn't any other way but armed struggle." Soon thereafter, writing about the "role of the intellectual in National Liberation movements," he stated that "we have nothing to defend in this system . . . and the system that will replace it can only be a socialist one."

continued on page 24



MARIO VARGAS LLOSA BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

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AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE: (Top Left) Cynthia Harvey in LA BAYADERE. Photo by Gregory Heisler. (Right) Amy Rose in GAÎTE PARISIENNE. Photo by Martha Swope. (Bottom) Ross Stretton, Martine van Hamel, Kevin McKenzie in ÉTUDES. Photo by Martha Swope.

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In August 1967 he was awarded the Rómulo Gallegos international literature prize for his second novel, *The Green House*. His acceptance speech in Caracas—"Literature Is Fire"—was an ardent defense of the Cuban revolution plus a prophesy that in "10, 20, or 50 years" the rest of Latin America would follow Cuba's way. Cuba and socialism were represented as modernity, liberal democracy as an anachronism.

But by then Vargas Llosa also had clear ideas about intellectual freedom. When the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968, he wrote that it was "a dishonor to Lenin's fatherland" and greatly harmful to the "cause of socialism." In April 1971, after the Cuban poet Heberto Padilla and several others who had been irreverent toward Castro were forced to undergo a public ceremony of "self-criticism," Vargas Llosa drafted a letter of protest to Fidel Castro. It was signed by an impressive array of writers and intellectuals. (Sartre was among them, although he continued to hold extreme beliefs that were no longer shared by Vargas Llosa.) Castro retaliated by calling them "cannaille" and "impudent" and barring their entrance to Cuba for an "indefinite and infinite" time.

Vargas Llosa, who was a member of the editorial board of the Cuban magazine *Casa de las Américas*, sent in his resignation and got a nasty reply from Cuba's senior cultural bureaucrat, Haydée Santamaría. She accused Vargas Llosa of having become one of the "worst detractors" of the Cuban revolution and, worse, of reneging on his alleged promise to donate the amount of the Rómulo Gallegos prize to Che Guevara's guerrilla movement in Bolivia, in order "to buy himself a home."

That was only the beginning. A steady stream of invective followed from Cubans and several of Latin America's more committed Castro supporters, even as Vargas Llosa protested that the incident did not reflect upon his overall solidarity with Cuba. Even as late as 1974 he wrote that Castro's choice of police-state socialism was a pragmatic choice of the "lesser evil," because it carried out the "essential reforms" that "can establish [for the majority of people] a more decent and equitable social order than the one the capitalistic system can ever guarantee." And he added that despite his utter distaste for police states and dogmatism, if he had to choose between socialism and liberal democracy he would "clench my teeth and still say 'for socialism.'"

Nevertheless, he was attacked by leftist literary critics, especially after the publication of his book on Gabriel García Márquez, *Historia de un deicidio* (History of a Deicide), in which Vargas Llosa attempted to explain the work of literary "demons," the obsessive, irrational part of literary creation. Marxist critics accused him of taking literary criticism out of its social and historical context, and thus failing to contribute to the revolutionary enterprise. Some years later, in February 1976, his long friendship with García Márquez (who has never broken ranks with Castro) ended on a melodramatic note. They met in a Mexico City theater, apparently after damaging gossip had been exchanged; and Vargas

Llosa knocked García Márquez out cold.

A long visit to Israel in 1977 changed Vargas Llosa's clenched-teeth notion of socialism. "This Israeli left, about which so little is said abroad," he said, "created the best institutions of the country—like the kibbutzim and the powerful trade union movement—and . . . still is the best guarantee for the future of the country." Vargas Llosa embraced this form of non-dogmatic socialism, which seemed capable both of achieving social justice and of preserving personal freedoms. It was at this point that he rediscovered Albert Camus, and discovered social democracy. He liked the fox's perspective: "Reading Isaiah Berlin," he wrote in a 1980 article, "I have seen . . . [that] true progress . . . has always been achieved thanks to a heterodox, partial, flexible application of social theories." And, although still acknowledging some achievements of Castro's social engineering, he wrote that though "... freedom and equality might be allergic to each other, this doesn't mean that we are condemned to injustice, only that we have to renounce extreme options, utopias."

I think that those were Vargas Llosa's best years, both in intellectual clarity and creativity. His major works, including *The War of the End of the World*, were written then. In general terms, the foxy outlook worked very well for him.

But between 1982 and '86, he metamorphosed into the free market hedgehog he is now. The most important spur to the change seems to have been the influence of the economist Hernando De Soto. De Soto, who returned from Switzerland in the late '70s, brought with him provocative new ideas about the prospects for capitalism in the Third World. The real practitioners of market economy, De Soto said, were not the members of the traditional entrepreneurial class, which inevitably was overprotected by the state and inefficient. He looked to the marginal entrepreneurs—the so-called informal sector—who in order to survive had to bypass stifling government regulations, putting into motion a true market economy. Soon De Soto's aggressive advocacy of largely spontaneous, individualistic entrepreneurship in Peru became the only serious alternative to the legal left's collectivist approach in the country's poorer communities.

De Soto's work impressed Vargas Llosa deeply. But further change was already under way. Increasingly his perception of intellectual social democracy as having a weak center of gravity led him to question its foundations. In a debate with Günter Grass that continued through 1983 and '84, Vargas Llosa accused Grass of defending totalitarian regimes in the Third World that Grass wouldn't countenance in Germany. Vargas Llosa objected to the "intellectual who believes that freedom is necessary and possible for his own country," yet acts as if it were "superfluous, unnecessary for other countries." While still declaring his respect for the notion of "democratic socialism," he wrote that the "romantic fallacy" of many European and American liberal and social democratic intellectuals was to interact politically with Latin America "as with a plebeian mistress with

whom all those secret fantasies and frightful excesses—prudently repressed in the relations with their wives (their native countries)—can be given free rein.”

During that period he was attacked more viciously than ever before by left-leaning intellectuals and press, and very few liberals and social democrats would defend him. Some even joined the vituperative chorus. The attacks were triggered mainly by his leading role in a government-appointed commission to investigate the killing of eight journalists in the violence-ravaged Ayacucho Andes in January 1983. Passions had been dangerously aroused, and conspiracy theories held the day. After a month-long investigation, the commission concluded that the journalists had been killed by the primitive Uchuraccay *comuneros*, who, fearing reprisal from the Shining Path (they had previously rebelled against it and killed some guerrillas), mistook the journalists for members of the enemy organization. Displeasure at the report promptly turned into attacks against Vargas Llosa.

The attacks gained momentum, and soon it became unfashionable to defend Vargas Llosa. In 1984 he wrote movingly about his continuous struggle against the “satanization mechanism,” an expression he used to describe various forms of character assassination. He scoffed at the idea that his opposition to Castro implied an affinity for reactionary dictatorships like those of Chile’s Pinochet. “Insults are unimportant,” he wrote unconvincingly. “But there is this perception of being in an absurd position, of being continually dragged into intellectual boxing matches at the sewer level. That’s what happens when you try to speak about freedom of speech and you are asked how much do you earn, why do you write in this newspaper and not in the other, and if you knew who funded that meeting in which you participated. . . . They are not trying to persuade or reply to the adversary, but to disqualify him morally, so that anything that comes out of the mouth—the pen—of this reprobate would be deemed unworthy of refutation.”

Lifelong friends joined in or allowed the attacks. Among them was Javier Silva Ruete (Javier in *Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter*), one of the owners of the daily *La República*, which was most vicious in the attacks. Then Vargas Llosa was called as a witness to the Ayacucho tribunal that was in charge of the Uchuraccay case, and for two days he was verbally mistreated and put under armed guard at the hotel by orders of the presiding judge. Back at the Lima airport he briefly broke down. A close friend and relative of Vargas Llosa’s considers the whole Uchuraccay episode to be “most important experience in his life.” It was an existential nadir: a ripe moment to be born again.

Although Vargas Llosa continued to produce a steady stream of articles and books, they were all minor works. At any rate, by 1984 he was entering a new political sphere. He had become acquainted with people like Jean-François Revel and Milton Friedman. Assertive, aggressive, welcoming, they made a striking contrast with the guilt-ridden social democratic appeasers. Bristling with intellectual weapons, they could counter almost any attack from the left, and offered

some offensive ones to boot, including exhaustive documentation of the record of Communist countries on income distribution, human rights, and so on.

Then in August 1987 Alan García, apparently bent on self-destruction, tried to nationalize Peru’s banks. Vargas Llosa and some friends, family, and newly made political allies published a manifesto calling the law a first step toward totalitarianism, a charge he genuinely appeared to believe at the time. He organized a public rally, which the government derided, expecting an audience of a few hundred wealthy Peruvians. Thousands appeared, and they listened eagerly to what Vargas Llosa had to say about García’s failings and about his vision of Peru’s economic and political future. The foxy stage became history.

After this first big anti-government rally, Vargas Llosa broke with De Soto, who has his own political ambitions, and who believes that some measure of cooperation with the Peruvian left is possible. “They have the sensitivity, although they don’t know the [free market] recipe,” De Soto told me recently. “It doesn’t matter if you use Sweden’s or Switzerland’s social system—both move toward modernity.” To Vargas Llosa there is no possible agreement with the left. “Look, I have been a Communist,” he told an interviewer lately. “I know very well the philosophy that ‘the end justifies the means.’” Cooperation with Marxists was pointless. “You cannot be a modern man and be a Marxist.”

His uncompromising position has struck a chord among Peruvians. Yet his detestation of the left could be a major problem for his government. For instance, in any democratic approach to counterinsurgency, the legal (Marxist and non-Marxist) left is going to play a crucial role. Its adherents have been extensively bloodied in this war and will probably continue to suffer the brunt of the fighting. Several leftist leaders, unprotected, suspect, have stoically resisted the Shining Path in areas where most forces of the state have either departed or made their presence felt only in search-and-destroy incursions. Between last January and November 50 mayors at the district and province level were slain. Leftist union and neighborhood leaders continue to resist the steady pressure of the Shining Path. To fail to understand that and enlist their contribution to democratic stability would reveal intolerance and shortsightedness rather than decisiveness.

Vargas Llosa also will need to be flexible when dealing with the economy. However critical it will be to achieve a balanced budget, the fact is that Peru is at war, and no war in history has been waged on a balanced budget. International help will be decisive. But Vargas Llosa will have a lot of new competition for it, especially from Eastern Europe. And most foreign investors will wait until it is clear that Vargas Llosa can improve the security situation.

Vargas Llosa has intelligence, courage, and integrity. What he lacks he will probably be able to learn. And, if history is any guide, this is not a man who is incapable of change. ●

BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Victims

Anyone who knows *The Threepenny Opera* will recognize lots of it from the fragments that flow past in **Mack the Knife** (21st Century). I don't know how much others will get from the film or how they will even understand it. But familiarity isn't exactly a blessing because the better we know the Brecht-Weill work, the more queasy this patchwork film is likely to make us.

Menahem Golan, the entrepreneur and director, apparently had two aims: to exploit the riches of the original (fair enough; this is not its first filming, anyway, and why shouldn't it be tried again?); and to make it as much like *Oliver!* as possible. *Oliver!* was a hit, wasn't it? Both the pieces are musicals, aren't they, both set in early 19th-century London?

Golan's second aim comes off better than his first. This tale of Macheath, the thief-amorist-killer, his gang, his whores, his marriages, and his brushes with the police, becomes the spriest, jolliest slum musical since the caramelizing of *Oliver Twist*. Yes, the cinematography by Elemer Ragalyi casts a non-sunny tone over it all, the costumes by John Bloomfield feature rags and crutches, we get plentiful close-ups of bad teeth and painted cheeks; but *Mack the Knife* is conceived and executed in the spirit of simon-impure show biz.

In the process, the original work gets condensed, shredded, rearranged, diluted. "Oh, there's that bit," we think from time to time as a shard of a song or scene floats by. Of the original timbre and intent, not much is left. At least one reason the original title isn't used is that

it wouldn't make much sense. The film opens as a show, with the street singer addressing the camera, and it closes as a show, on the stage of a London theater; but the Brechtian idea derived from John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*—an opera whose magnificence was dreamed up by beggars, priced at what beggars could afford—is out the window. What we get is a series of grabs at making scenes effective, hurried and harried along by Golan's hyperactive camera, with no regard for entity or aim.

I am one of the benighted who think that Brecht's book is the weaker of the work's two principal elements. One of my questions is about what Eliot called the objective correlative. On the one hand is the story of the elegant, charming, cruel, hedonistic Captain Macheath; on the other is the recurrent theme of the downtrodden poor, a subject that is often touched in the dia-

logue and some of the lyrics. Does the story dramatize the theme? Not that I can see. Macheath is no Robin Hood, nor are we ever shown that it was wretched poverty that drove him to crime. Golan, however, who wrote his own adaptation, solved this problem neatly by omitting almost all of Brecht's references to poverty and oppression. This is cutting the Gordian knot with a lawn mower.

As for Weill's music—surely an unsurpassed theater score—it has been dissected, reduced, and reassembled. When Marc Blitzstein reorchestrated Weill for the off-Broadway production in 1954, he was chided for tampering with Weill's original. (He had arguable reasons for his changes.) No one could possibly object to the changes here; no one would know where to begin. The credits list five arrangers and a musical director, Dov Seltzer, and en bloc they have rendered this precise, sparkling score into Weill's Greatest Hits Arranged for Soundtrack, a continuous ribbon of music that completely negates the Brecht-Weill principle of drama interrupted by music for specific reasons. The translations of Brecht's lyrics are partly Blitzstein's, mostly (I believe) by Golan and Seltzer, none the better for the mixture.

Raul Julia, who played Macheath on the New York stage in 1976, does much better here, as far as circumstances permit; the intervening years have brought him much more skill (although he still can't sing very well). Macheath's latest wife, Polly Peachum, is a mistake named Rachel Robertson. Other mistakes are Bill Nighy as Tiger Brown, the police chief, and Julie Walters as Mrs. Peachum. A pleasant surprise is Richard Harris—the head of the beggars' syndicate, Mr. Peachum—underplaying gushily as Wilfred Lawson might have done. (Remember Lawson as Doolittle in the *Pygmalion* film?) Roger Daltrey is unsinister as the street

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Enemies, A Love Story. A man and three women, all survivors of Nazi horrors, amorously entangled in New York, 1949. I. B. Singer's daringly comic novel excellently transposed by Paul Mazursky and a superb cast. (Reviewed 1/1/90) **Glory.** Edward Zwick's second film is a full-bodied, thrilling account of a black regiment in the Union Army. Matthew Broderick is insufficient as their colonel, but all the others—and the firm texture of the piece—are splendid. (1/8&15/90) **Henry V.** Much more cinematic than Olivier's version. Kenneth Branagh, who adapted, directed, and plays Henry, is not in Olivier's class as an actor, but he's fresh—and has made a magnificent film. (12/4/89) **Roger & Me.** A documentary—sly and witty but basically angry—about the hardships in Flint, Michigan, brought on by GM plant closings. Michael Moore, who made it, hangs the film on his attempts to see Roger Smith, GM president. (1/22/90) —SK

singer but tolerable. The outstanding performance is by Julia Migenes as the lovelorn prostitute, Jenny. An accomplished opera singer—she was Carmen in Francesco Rosi's film—Migenes of course has the best voice in the film, but she also has style and temperament. Golan's wisest decision was to let her number, "Pirate Jenny," run more fully than other musical numbers (though he cuts away several times during it to illustrate what she is singing).

Shohei Imamura is a tough nut to crack, and the American public—the portion of it that's interested in Japanese films—is unlikely to do it. This director's subjects are harsh: rape, incest, murder, dire poverty are some of them. Donald Richie has noted that Imamura operates on the two-Japan premise: one, the "official" version—the "often beautiful world of the Noh and the tea ceremony" and similar elements that make up Japan-for-export; the other, "the 'real' version . . . selfish, lusty, amoral, innocent, and completely natural." Imamura's concern with the "real" Japan makes him less accessible to those who prefer the other (though no less true), traditional Japan. This difficulty is increased because his films vary widely in quality, from the blatancy of *Pigs and Battleships*, an attack on American postwar influence, to the fierce excellence of *L'engeance Is Mine*, in which a mass murderer enacts a drama of spiritual bleakness. But to miss Imamura's best work is to miss the best of a director whom some have called, with justice, the finest Japanese filmmaker of his generation. (He was born in 1926.)

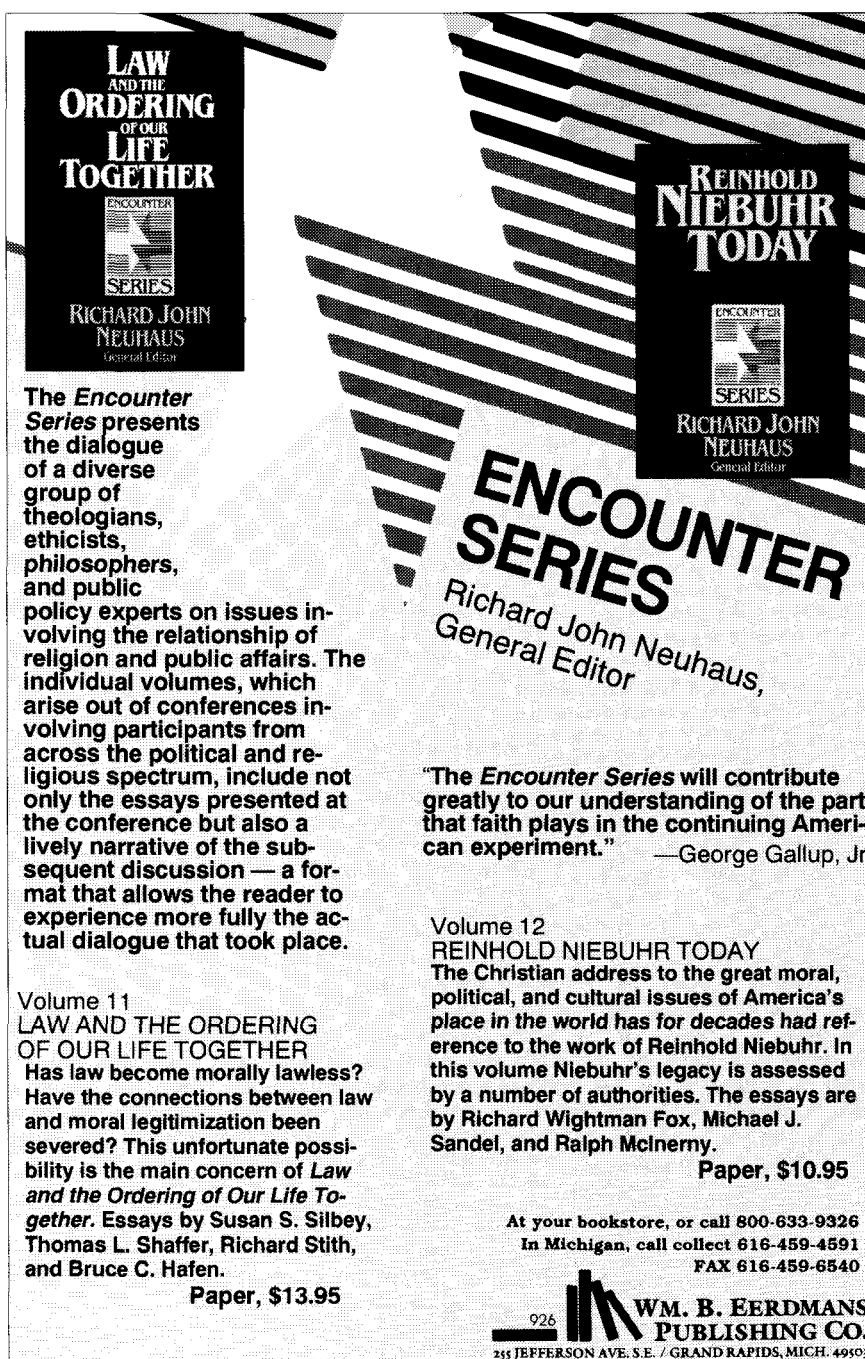
His latest to reach here is *Black Rain* (Angelika)—obviously nothing to do with the recent Michael Douglas thriller of that title. The black rain is literally such: a black liquid that fell from the sky after the A-bomb explosion in Hiroshima. Three of those who are spattered are a young woman, played by Yoshiko Tanaka, and her aunt and uncle. The three make their way to the uncle's home in a mountain village, and the film, written by Imamura and Toshiro Ishido from a novel by Masuji Ibuse, then concentrates on how, after five years or so, the radiation sickness affects the three principals and their friends.

Tanaka is the center of the story, as her uncle tries affectionately but persistently to get her married, urging her and others to disbelieve that she is ill. Somewhat reluctantly, she consents to get engaged, but the betrothal comes to nothing. Toward the end, her chief bond of sympathy is with a villager somewhat deranged by his combat experience. He worships her, and it is with him that she feels most at ease. But even this bond

cannot last because of her illness.

Imamura shows here more gentleness than I've seen in his films, more regard for desolation than for the brute causes of it. The scenes in Hiroshima after the bombing are staggeringly veristic, but the quiet mountain village is the main setting, where the grim realities gradually seep through the postcard prettiness. Imamura hasn't really softened. Near the end the radio brings a report to the village that the United States may use the A-bomb in North Korea if it's thought necessary. The villagers' reaction to this report signifies that the old forthright Imamura is still on hand.

The film was shot in black and white by Takashi Kawamata—mostly in delicate gradations of gray. Imamura has made the most of Kawamata's talent: a long shot of a jammed railway station platform looks as if the crowd had been sliced off at the platform edge with a huge cleaver; a floor-level dinner scene in the uncle's home under one light bulb looks as if the people there had been drawn by the magic of that bulb. And Imamura has drawn flawless performances from his cast. Tanaka, especially, speaks through her very person of resignation—resignation to bewilderment—more pitifully than subtitles can convey. •



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Robert Brustein on Theater

Emerging British Directors

It is commonly assumed that theater in our time is dominated by arrogant auteur directors—not without considerable grumbling from those who believe this development has usurped the traditional authority of playwrights and actors. But a great variety of different directors work in today's theater, most of them relatively self-effacing. In a recent article, Oscar Brockett identifies at least four distinct directorial categories: (1) *Interpretive*, stemming from Stanislavsky, where the director remains faithful to the playwright's instructions (Elia Kazan, Allan Schneider, Jerry Zaks, Gregory Mosher); (2) *Translative*, stemming from Meyerhold, where the director may depart from the literal text to capture its spirit through metaphorical probes (Peter Stein, Ariane Mnouchkine, Giorgio Strehler, Andrei Serban, Ingmar Bergman); (3) *Found Object*, stemming from Brecht, where a play is reshaped according to the director's political, social, or aesthetic idiosyncrasies (Lee Breuer and Mabou Mines, Elizabeth LaCompte and the Wooster Group); and (4) *Performance Art*, where the director is the author of the entire work (Robert Wilson, Martha Clarke, Tadashi Suzuki, Tadeusz Kantor).

Among these approaches, it is the "interpretive" directorial mode that continues to dominate mainstream American theater, which has always valued plot, character, and performance, while the current experimental procedures featuring visual ideas and thematic explorations still put conservative critics and audiences into spasms. Previously, with the notable exception of Peter Brook (at first a "translative" director, now one experimenting with "found objects" and "performance art"), the English theater has been the traditional home of "interpretive" directors, whether staging classics or new plays. It is the subsidized stages of Europe and the Orient, not the West End or English repertory theaters, that have proved most hospitable to radical postmodernist techniques. Now this situation seems to be changing. As one who has often criticized English theater—and its pervasive influence on ours—for stuffiness and conventionality, I am obliged to admit that British directors are finally devel-

oping their own innovative styles.

But you won't find any confirmation of this in Peter Hall's production of *The Merchant of Venice* at the 46th Street Theatre. Even critics who have praised his version concede that it fails to provide new insight into a play that shrieks for reinterpretation. Hall's is a picture-book production—decorated with illustrations and paintings from *The Modern Reader's Shakespeare*. The characters are costumed like engravings from 19th-century theater, and the action is set in a spanking clean Venetian piazza, sullied only by a single homeless beggar. The actors are identified alphabetically as "The Peter Hall Company," but like his recent "company" production of *Orpheus Descending*, this *Merchant* is clearly an occasion for a star performance.

Too bad it doesn't have one. Dustin Hoffman has been cast in the part of Shylock, but he leaves no signature on the role. Few of the English performers bother to make anything but rhythmic sense of the verse—they act exclusively with their mouths and resonators—and Hoffman has curiously chosen to give an elocutionary performance too. But he lacks the vocal equipment. His youthful Shylock is without size, edge, power, or point of view. Luther Adler portrayed Shylock as a sorely tried victim, pushed to extremes by a vicious gentile society; Morris Carnovsky interpreted him as a venerable Talmudic scholar; Laurence Olivier conjured up a shrewd Victorian businessman. But Hoffman bleeds all color out of the part, turning Shylock into Willy Loman with a skullcap in a costume version of *Death of a Salesman* (*Death of a Merchant?*).

The only juice in this production is provided by spittle. Antonio and Gratiano spit on Shylock's head. Honing his knife in preparation for drawing his side of human beef, Shylock spits on his shoe. Leaning down to cut through his victim's breast, he expels a retaliatory gob into Antonio's face. There's enough hawking, spraying, and spewing in this production to fill the Croton reservoir. But the only thing resembling a dramatic moment comes when Lorenzo expresses exasperation over Lancelot Gobbo. Geraldine James plays Portia like an angular, fidgety, bossy feminist; Leigh Lawson's Antonio has overtones of Jesus on

the cross; Peter-Hugo Daly's Lancelot Gobbo is stock company Dickens. In fact, the only thing that kept me sentient during this tiresome evening was admiring how English actors could add so many syllables to a simple word like "o-c-e-an."

Following this matinee performance, I flew to London for a weekend, expecting more of the same, and was pleasantly surprised by the three productions I saw there. At the Old Vic, Jonathan Miller—in his continuing effort to introduce the British public to unfamiliar plays from the Continent—has directed *The Liar* (*Le menteur*), an obscure comedy by Corneille. British versions of classical French drama are usually done like Restoration comedy or set in modern drawing rooms. Miller's *Liar* proved more faithful to the Gallic spirit. Played within an essentially white, Magritte-like set by Peter J. Davison that exposed the wooden-and-canvas construction of its canted doors and broken arches, *The Liar* was offered as a self-enclosed piece of stagecraft with presentational performances—particularly by Alex Jennings in the title role—that were unabashedly theatrical.

The play is a trifle in rhymed alexandrines. Even Ranjit Bolt, the translator, calls it "gloriously, unrepentantly superficial in the high Baroque manner." The program note, titled "Trivial Plays for Serious People," employs elaborate and rather unconvincing historical arguments to justify the play's frivolity. Molière would have taken a character like Dorante, the compulsive liar, and turned him into an obsessive "malade" with a spiraling effect on all around him. Corneille simply uses Dorante's lying as a device for postponing the romantic pairings at the end. Why exhume the piece then? Probably to display Miller's brilliant visual imagination and deft control of comic timing and characterization, or, more likely, to prepare for a production of Corneille's more weighty *L'illusion Comique* to be directed by Richard Jones later in the season.

Richard Jones is one of those young English directors—others are two more Miller protégés, Steven Pimlott and Roger Michell, as well as Deborah Warner and Nicholas Hytner—who have recently been exposing the British stage to imported theater techniques. Jones has been deeply influenced by Meyerhold (an arcane name to the theater that just recently discovered Stanislavsky), and his two successes at Miller's Old Vic (Feydeau's *A Flea in Her Ear* and an Ostrovsky adaptation called *Too Clever By Half*) were traditionally farces subjected to expressionist exaggeration. I saw his

production of Prokofiev's **Love of Three Oranges** at the English National Opera, and it confirmed the reputation of this imaginative institution as the center for the greatest directorial daring in the British theater. This is the version that features the "scratch and sniff" cards, designed to provide olfactory accompaniment to the citric quest of the opera. But although this gimmick attracted most of the publicity, it is a more lunatic playfulness that makes the show so appealing. With The Brothers Quay contributing the freakish outsized sets and Sue Blane the farfetched costumes, this musical Gozzi adaptation seemed to be a cross between *The Wizard of Oz*, *Alice in Wonderland*, and *Monty Python*, with a bit of Christmas pantomime and Russian constructivism thrown in for good measure. One example of Jones's mischievous water-closet wit: the bogeyman Farfello appears as a demonic farting machine and the entire chorus confronts him wearing World War I gas masks.

Perhaps the strongest production I saw on this trip, however, was Deborah Warner's treatment of Brecht's **The Good Person of Sichuan** at the National Theatre. This play is better known as *The Good Woman of Setzuan*, but, although "good person" is a more accurate rendering of Brecht's *gute Mensch*, I suspect it was retitled partly for feminist reasons: Warner provides the work with powerful contemporary reverberations. Using the rarely produced "Santa Monica" version, which Brecht revised when living in California, the production has the selfish flier, Yang Sun, end up not as Shen Te's foreman but rather as an opium addict screaming for a fix, while Shen Te's profiteering includes adventures in the drug trade. Sue Blane's design sets the action under what appears to be a demolished section of Waterloo Bridge (Brecht's "poor" are now identified as the "homeless"), but the ruined environment is festooned with shattered bicycles that also recall the recent massacre in Tiananmen Square.

A program note designates Sichuan as "half-Westernized." The production goes this more than half by thoroughly Anglicizing every aspect of the action. The three gods appear first in bowlers, macs, and spats; Wang the water seller speaks with a Glasgow burr; the barber Shu Fu is costumed in white clogs and a black suit, with a white carnation in his buttonhole; Yang Sun's mother is a British mum in a pink hat and shawl. The only Oriental to be seen on stage, in fact, is a little Chinese boy rooting around in a rubbish bin for food.

I felt a little momentary resentment at this further proof of how English theater tends to colonialize everything foreign—

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and I was initially repelled by the way this "poor" play was being spread out all over the rich Olivier stage. By the second part, however, I was won over to Warner's concept by the strength of the acting and the consistency of the idea. As Shen Te, Fiona Shaw embodies the subtle feminist implications of a production staffed largely with women by playing this warmhearted prostitute as a physically unappealing human being—a bony, awkward schoolgirl in a unisex haircut and a print dress. Like the other women in the play, she doesn't display much softness or femininity; in fact, she's much more convincing as her alter ego, Shui Ta, the male "cousin" who saves the softhearted Shen Te from bankruptcy. Attired in a black suit, red tie, and white mask, Shaw plays Shui Ta like a gum-chewing Mafia hood with a pencil mus-

tache and spiv accent, yet all the while managing to inform the role with a pervasive despair.

What's lacking in Warner's production is the naive simplicity of Brecht's parable, which—like so many plays in his later period—was based on the conventions of Oriental theater. Yet there's a lot of fire in the evening; at times, the director's social indignation even seems to surpass the playwright's. The production has not been very well received, possibly because the English public has never been very fond of Brecht. But with the aid of Michael Hofman's excellent translation and the uniformly strong acting of the entire cast, Deborah Warner here manages to consolidate her place in the forefront of the directors who are mercifully changing the face of English theater. •

murky fluid of his octopus fear of being old hat, and claims that he is now only doing what he has always done—move ahead, take the music forward, submit to the personal curse that is his need for change, the same need that brought him to New York from St. Louis in 1944, in search of Charlie Parker.

Before he was intimidated into mining the fool's gold of rock 'n' roll, Davis's achievement was large and complex, as a trumpet player and an improviser. Though he was never of the order of Armstrong, Young, Parker, or Monk, the sound that finally came to identify him was as original as any in the history of jazz. His technical limitations were never as great as commonly assumed, except when he was strung out on drugs and didn't practice. By January 1949, when he recorded "Overtime" with Dizzy Gillespie and Fats Navarro, he was taking a backseat to nobody in execution. By May 1949, when he traveled to France and was recorded in performance, he was muscling his way across the horn in molten homage to Navarro and Gillespie, the two leading technicians of the bebop era; he was three weeks short of his 23rd birthday and already had big band experience with Billy Eckstine and Gillespie, already had stood next to Charlie Parker night after night on bandstands and in studios.

The conventional idea that Davis discovered that he couldn't play like Gillespie, and proceeded to develop a style of stark, hesitant, even blushing lyricism that provided a contrast to Parker's flood of virtuosic executions, is only partly true. A methodical musician, Davis systematically worked through the things that were of interest to him. Eventually he personalized the levels of declamation, nuance, melodic fury, and pathos that are heard, for example, in Parker's "Bird of Paradise." But first he examined Gillespie's fleet approach and harmonic intricacy, which was the dominant approach to bebop trumpet. From Gillespie, he learned bebop harmony and was also encouraged to use the keyboard to solve problems; he even took from Gillespie an aspect of timbral piquancy that settled beneath the surface of his sound. But Davis rejected the basic nature of Gillespie's tone, which few found as rich or as attractive as the idiomatic achievements of the Negroid brass vocabulary that had preceded the innovations of bebop. Davis grasped the musical power that comes of having a sound that is itself a musical expression.

He moved in the direction of a refined and raw understanding of tonal manipulation based in the blues. His early problems with pitch demanded that he focus

Miles Davis, the most brilliant sellout in the history of jazz.

Play The Right Thing

BY STANLEY CROUCH

The contemporary Miles Davis, when one hears his music or watches him perform, deserves the description that Nietzsche gave of Wagner: "the greatest example of self-violation in the history of art." Davis made much fine music for the first half of his professional life, and represented for many the uncompromising Afro-American artist contemptuous of Uncle Tom, but he has fallen from grace—and been celebrated for it. As usual, the fall from grace has been a form of success. Desperate to maintain his position at the forefront of modern music, to sustain his financial position, to be admired for the hipness of his purported innovations, Davis turned butt to the beautiful in order to genuflect before the commercial.

Once given to exquisite dress, Davis now comes on the bandstand draped in the expensive bad taste of rock 'n' roll. He walks about the stage, touches foreheads with the saxophonist as they play a duet, bends over and remains in that ridiculous position for long stretches as he blows at the floor, invites his white female percussionist to come, bare-midriffed, down a ramp and do a jungle-

STANLEY CROUCH's book of essays, *Notes of a Hanging Judge*, is due out in March from Oxford University Press.

movie dance as she accompanies herself with a talking drum, sticks out his tongue at his photographers, leads the din of electronic clichés with arm signals, and trumpets the many fades of his own force with amplification that blurts forth a sound so decadent that it can no longer disguise the shriveling of its maker's soul.

Miles: The Autobiography
by Miles Davis
with Quincy Troupe
(Simon and Schuster, 431 pp., \$22.95)

Miles Davis
Chronicle: The Complete Prestige
Recordings, 1951-1956
(Prestige, \$125)

Beyond the terrible performances and the terrible recordings, Davis has also become the most remarkable lick of moneyed boots in the music business, willing now to pimp himself as he once pimped women when he was a drug addict. He can be seen on television talking about the greatness of Prince, or claiming (in his new autobiography, *Miles*) that the Minneapolis vulgarian and borderline drag queen "can be the new Duke Ellington of our time if he just keeps at it." Once nicknamed Inky for his dark complexion, Davis now hides behind the

first on the quality, the weight, and the accuracy of his sound. Once he established control over his tone, Davis's work began to reflect his affection for the resources of color and nuance heard in Armstrong, Freddy Webster, Harry Edison, Buck Clayton, Rex Stewart, Navarro, Dud Bascomb, Ray Nance. But his extraordinary discipline led him to strip everything away, striving for a sound that was direct in its clarity, almost pristine in its removal from the world of Negro trumpet tone. On that clean slate, Davis later added dramatic timbres and attacks.

Next Davis chose to work out a style that was superficially simple, that was rarely given to upper-register explosions or to the rhythmic disruptions that the boppers had built upon the droll games that Lester Young played with the beat. On his first recording as a leader in May 1947, Davis already had the dark, warm sensuousness that he later extended and refined. By using Charlie Parker on tenor, rather than on his customary alto, Davis got a thicker texture, the sort of thickness that he favored in his later quintets; and a number of writers have heard premonitions of the tonal concerns, the phrasings, and the moods of "The Birth of the Cool," the highly celebrated but essentially lightweight nonet sessions that Davis steered a few years later.

But the essential influence on Davis's first recordings as a leader was still Parker. The saxophonist's 1946 recording of his "Yardbird Suite"

with Davis as a sideman shows precisely the ease that characterizes the playing and the writing of the trumpeter's own session, especially "Half Nelson" and "Milestones." On that first date, Davis not only plays quite well himself, but uses the mood of the material to inspire Parker to reach for an emotional projection that the saxophonist rarely called upon. Davis resides comfortably in the middle register as he improvises through the difficult harmonies of his compositions, sailing and swinging in almost seamless legato eighth notes on "Little Willie Leaps" and inventing a meticulous thematic improvisation on "Half

Nelson." Harmonically his notes say bebop, and he works toward the layered sound that has a top, a middle, and a bottom, all the while understating a thoroughly felt joy as he nearly swings the ink off his tail.

Equally important were a number of other recording dates under Parker's leadership. There are examples in the ballad sessions of the winter of 1947 of the softer approach to sound and ensemble, as when Parker plays delicate and soaring obbligatos behind Davis on "Embraceable You," "Out of Nowhere,"

keyed and smooth, that disavowed the Afro-American approach to sound and rhythm. This style had little to do with blues and almost nothing to do with swing. That Davis, one of the most original improvisers, a man with a great feeling for blues, a swinger almost of the first magnitude, should have put "cool" in motion is telling. Indeed, it is the first, premonitory example of his dual position in jazz.

Heard now, the nonet recordings seem little more than primers for television writing. What the recordings show us, though, is that Davis, like many other jazzmen, was not above the academic temptation of Western music. Davis turns out to have been overly impressed by the lessons he received at Juilliard, when he arrived in New York in 1944. The pursuit of a soft sound, the uses of polyphony that were far from idiomatic, the nearly coy understatement, the lines that had little internal propulsion: all amount to another failed attempt to marry jazz to European devices. The overstated attribution of value to these recordings led the critical establishment to miss Ellington's "The Tattooed Bride," which was the high point of jazz composition of the late 1940s. Then, as now, jazz critics seemed unable to determine the difference between a popular but insignificant trend and a fresh contribution to the art.

Davis began making his truest contributions as a leader in the 1950s. The Prestige recordings from 1951 to 1956 have been reissued in a single package, and it constitutes one of the richest bodies of work in small-group jazz. One hears Davis consolidating influences, superbly cross-weaving improvisational styles and instrumental approaches, in his own playing and in that of the musicians he brought together. The quintet included John Coltrane and a rhythm section that was nearly as important to jazz of the '50s as Basie's was to that of the '30s.

In the early '50s, inspired by Monk, Armstrong, Young, and Holiday, Davis learned to strip away everything not essentially musical. He maintained the harmonic sophistication of the bebop



MILES DAVIS BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

and "My Old Flame." Even earlier, as the flutist and composer James Newton points out, the contrapuntal Parker writing of "A-Leu-Cha" and "Chasin' the Bird" brought to bebop qualities that Davis's "cool" nonet explored. By "Marmaduke" in 1948, Davis is much closer to the almost purely melodic style of quiet but calling intensity that became an important aspect of his musical signature.

Then came "The Birth of the Cool." Davis's nonet of 1948-50 played little in public and recorded only enough to fill an album, but it largely inspired what became known as "cool" or "West Coast" jazz, a light-sounding music, low-

school, but picked only the most telling notes for the construction of his melodic lines. He recognized that the smooth swing of Basie and the territory bands used pulsations that, for all their flirtations with the beat, were never jerky. In this work Davis sublimely combined the unsentimental detailings of tone, emotion, and attack of the blues; the joy and the surprise of Armstrong and Young that melodically rose up over the tempo and meter of ensembles in the '30s; and the idealistic but earthy sensuousness of the romantic balladeer.

One of the more interesting things about Davis during these years is that he brought together musicians with varied tastes in sound. As early as 1946, when he recorded "Yardbird Suite" and "Ornithology" with Parker, the smooth, vibratoless sound of Parker was contrasted with the heavier Coleman Hawkins-derived tone of Lucky Thompson's tenor. Davis himself had worked with Hawkins, and used tenor players rooted in Hawkins's work (such as Thompson and Sonny Rollins) until he hired Coltrane. But his alto choices were always Parker-derived, such as Jackie McLean and Davey Schildkraut. Just as he was interested in bringing together the essences of blues-based trumpet and ensemble swing with the lessons of the bebop movement, Davis also seemed to want to fuse the tones of those different schools in his ensembles.

Thus, in 1951, he brought McLean and Rollins together for a sextet recording, the instrumentation foreshadowing the six-piece group he later led with Cannonball Adderley and Coltrane. Davis played with confidence on the blues, gave poignance to the ballads, swung with very individual articulation on McLean's "Dig." But perhaps the high point of the session was Rollins's tenor on "It's Only A Paper Moon," where his gruff and ghostly sound reached startling levels of lyricism and fresh phrasing. For the next three years he was playing marvelously, with J.J. Johnson, Jackie McLean, Jimmy Heath, Horace Silver, Gil Coggins, Percy Heath, Kenny Clarke, and Art Blakey on Blue Note Records. And in 1954 Davis reached one of his first peaks as a bandleader and a player. In March he recorded a version of "Old Devil Moon" that had an arranged and recurring vamp that anticipated the sound of the Coltrane rhythm section of the 1960s.

In April he brought together trombonist J.J. Johnson, Lucky Thompson, pianist Horace Silver, bassist Percy Heath, and drummer Kenny Clarke. According to Silver, Thompson had written arrangements that didn't come off, and

they did two blues numbers, a fast and a slow blues, "Walkin'" and "Blue and Boogie," to avoid a failed day in the studio. The results were signal achievements. The weight of the ensemble sound is perfectly balanced and darkened, Davis's and Johnson's broad brass tones melding in unison with Thompson's thick, breathy tenor; Silver's percussive attack and the ideal mesh of Heath's bass notes with Clarke's cymbals and drums form perhaps Davis's first great rhythm section. On the swift "Blue and Boogie" the trumpeter moves over the horn with grace and pride, his last two choruses a response to the emerging challenge of Clifford Brown.

In December Davis used Heath and Clarke again, but instead of horns he brought Monk's piano and Milt Jackson's vibes. The overtones of Davis's trumpet and the ringing of Jackson's metal keys achieved another superior texture (this one foreshadowed the electric piano on *Filles de Kilimanjaro*, the trumpeter's last important jazz record some 14 years away). Davis's abstraction of the melody of "The Man I Love" reached back in conception, but not in execution, to Parker's classic transformation of "Embraceable You." Because of the trumpeter's problems with Monk's style—contrapuntal, icily voiced, given as much to ongoing improvised arrangement as to chordal statement—Davis asked the pianist to "stroll," or lay out, during his improvisations. The musical effect is systematically wonderful, however much Monk was irritated. Monk's improvisations are easily the highest expressions of originality and profundity in all of the Prestige sessions.

They are also the peak of piano playing on any Miles Davis recording. Monk brings a motivic brilliance, a command of inflection and timbre, and an idealistic lyricism that are unexpected in their purity. His playing is as far from European convention as bottleneck guitar work. His melodic response to Davis on "The Man I Love" is startling. And on "Swing Spring," Davis pulls off what must be one of his best spontaneous decisions. Featured first with just bass (Percy Heath) and drums (Kenny Clarke), he jumps back in after Jackson finishes his improvisation and Monk is about to play. Monk stops immediately, and Davis plays again with Heath and Clarke, choosing to use a patented Monk phrase for his last chorus. He builds upon it and finishes. Monk then picks up the phrase and invents one of his most masterful recorded performances. It is, quite simply, one of the high points of jazz.

As Davis developed into the next phase of his bandleading and his improvising, he

continued to expand on blues, pop songs, Kansas City swing, and the conceptions he personalized from Parker, Monk, and Ahmad Jamal, whose 1955 arrangement of Ravel's "Pavane" provided the structure for Davis's 1959 "So What" and the melody for Coltrane's 1961 "Impressions." When he formed his first great quintet in 1955, with Coltrane, pianist Red Garland, bassist Paul Chambers, and drummer Philly Joe Jones, Davis not only improvised marvelously eight times out of ten, but also wrote particularly imaginative arrangements. Much of the praise that this quintet has received is deserved. It was a unit that had invincible swing at any tempo, that utilized the possibilities of group color with consistent intelligence, that stoked fire as ably as it crooned. No small part of Davis's achievement was his rhythm section, an ongoing, spontaneously self-orchestrating unit of piano, bass, and drums that delineated the forms of the tunes, responded to the improvisation of the featured horns, loosened and tightened the beat, and swung with an almost peerlessly precise attention to color and the varied possibilities of harmonic-percussive drama. Still, what made this band so wonderful was Davis's breadth of emotional expression. His sensibility drew on the entire sweep of jazz feeling, from the playful to the tender to the pugnacious to the aloof to the gutbucket-greasy and the idealistically lyrical.

When he moved to Columbia Records in 1957 and *'Round About Midnight* was released with the same musicians, Davis was on the verge of becoming a star, a large influence, a matinee idol, and a man destined to sink down in a way no one—himself least of all—could have imagined. Columbia Records, with its distribution and promotion networks, its record club, the air play its products received, and the ink it could generate outside the jazz press, started the most significant leg of Davis's march to celebrity. The trumpeter soon saw his performances and his recordings become emblems of taste in contemporary art.

With Nat Cole and Sidney Poitier, moreover, Davis became part of an expanding vision of American glamour in which dark-hued Negroes were admitted into precincts of romance and elegance that had previously been almost the exclusive province of light-skinned Afro-Americans like Billy Eckstine. As Betty Carter observed of Davis's matinee-idol appeal, "Miles wasn't a power trumpet player, he was a stylist. He had a soft, melodic approach that made him very popular with women. Women really liked him the way they liked Dexter Gordon, Gene Ammons, Ben Webster,

Johnny Hodges, and all of those guys who knew how to play things that had some sweetness in them."

Davis also benefited from a shift in audience taste that harked back to the popularity of the glowering, sullen, even contemptuous 19th-century minstrel characters known as Jasper Jack and Zip Coon, who sassed and sometimes assaulted the plantation white folks. Davis's bandstand attitude originated in the bebop generation's rejection of Armstrong's mugging and joking, in a trend of aggression that opened part of the way to what became blaxploitation ten years later (and now causes whites who confuse their own masochism with sensitivity to celebrate Spike Lee). The result was superbly described by Ralph Ellison:

a grim comedy of racial manners; with the musicians employing a calculated surliness and rudeness, treating the audience very much as many white merchants in poor Negro neighborhoods treat their customers, and the white audiences were shocked at first but learned quickly to accept such treatment as evidence of "artistic" temperament. Then comes a comic reversal. Today the white audience expects the rudeness as part of the entertainment.

A story about Davis from this period may be apocryphal, but it has poetic truth. It has been related that one night a European woman approached Davis at the bar in Birdland to tell him that she loved his music, that she bought all his records, even though they were quite expensive in her country. Davis is said to have replied, "So fucking what, bitch?" As the stunned woman walked away, the musician with Davis said, "Miles, you really are an evil little black sonofabitch, aren't you?" And the trumpeter replied, "Now the bitch will buy two of every one of my records. When you have stock in Con Edison and make all the money I make, you have to act the way people expect you to act—they want me to be their evil nigger, and that's what I'm ready to be."

These first developments in ugliness aside, Davis's achievement in those years was genuine. It drew not only on the detailed, idiomatic thought of his own musical conceptions, but also on his interaction with his musicians. Just as Davis had been deeply impressed by the spare side of Monk's decidedly Afro-American approach to instrumental technique, and by Monk's immaculate sense of thematic variation, so Coltrane, when he left Davis to work with Monk in the summer of 1957, was inspired to push beyond his superior bebop art; Monk remade Coltrane substantially, and even the 16th-note rhythms that the saxophonist worked on until the

end of his career were introduced by the pianist's formidable "Trinkle Tinkle." Thus, when Coltrane returned to Davis's band in 1958, he brought materials that elevated the intellect, the surprise, and the fire of the group. In fact, as the 1960 Stockholm recording shows, the saxophonist was blowing the trumpeter off his own bandstand.

But Davis understood how to use Coltrane. By now he was fully his own man. The album *Milestones* shows how well he understood that a jazz recording should emulate a strong 40-minute set in a nightclub. Though the underrecorded piano greatly reduces the power of what is quite mighty swing, the recital shows

just how much of a bopper Davis still was, and how strongly he believed in the blues as an organizing tool for the overall sound of a recording. Four of the six pieces are blues numbers; each is approached differently, utilizing varied tempos, big band effects, saxophone exchanges of entire choruses, drum breaks, harmonization, unisons, antiphony. With the title work, moreover, Davis began his exploration of modal materials—limited harmonic structures that relied on scales—and pointed toward *Kind of Blue*, perhaps his most influential album and certainly one of his finest achievements.

In the interest of accuracy, however, it

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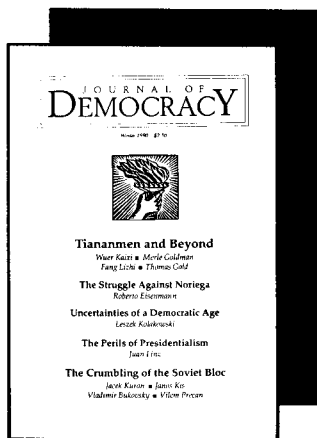
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is important to recognize that Davis's publicity, and the cult that has grown up around him, inflated his work out of proportion. As a trumpeter, Davis was constantly challenged by Clifford Brown, who died, at the age of 25, in an automobile accident in 1956. By 1953 Brown was being hailed as "the new Dizzy." His extraordinary technique, his large sound, his unlimited swing, and his heroic combination of melancholy and grandeur brought an Armstrong-like bravura to the bebop trumpet. Brown's recordings show that he possessed qualities of beauty that Davis would never equal. Had Brown lived, Davis would have had to deal with another force of unarguable potency. It is the influence of Brown, not Davis, that has dominated the instrument, from Donald Byrd and Lee Morgan through Freddie Hubbard and Booker Little, and now Wynton Marsalis.

Other strengths of Davis's have been overstated, too. His idea of the small group was, finally, no more sophisticated than John Lewis's, Charles Mingus's, or Horace Silver's, and he was rarely as imaginative in his arrangements. Though his fame grew, he had yet to explore the kinds of metric innovations that obsessed Max Roach. And as the Dizzy Gillespie-Sonny Rollins-Sonny Stitt sessions of December 1957 reveal, especially in the playing of Rollins and Gillespie on "Wheatleigh Hall" and of all three on the "The Eternal Triangle," the Davis group on *Milestones* was far from the last word in swing or fire.

As for formal innovations, both George Russell and Mingus examined modal forms before Davis, and each made use of pianist Bill Evans (who became important to the next stage of Davis's development). Rollins's *Freedom Suite*, from the summer of 1958, exhibits a much more provocative and successful conception of group rhythm and extended form than anything Davis had produced. (What Rollins did with tenor saxophone, bass, and drums has still to receive the critical recognition it deserves.) And compare Davis's much-lauded improvisation on "Sid's Ahead" from *Milestones* of 1958 with Louis Armstrong's "Wild Man Blues" of 1957: you will see a vast difference in subtlety, nuance, melodic order, and swing. As fine a player as he had become, Davis could not even approximate Armstrong's authority.

Still, of all the trumpet players who came to power during and after the first shock waves of Parker's innovations, Davis seemed the one who would eventually come the closest to Armstrong's emotional gravity. As he proved with his ee-

rie, isolated, and mournful playing for the score of the murder thriller *Escalator to the Scaffold*, and in the better moments of his collaborations with the arranger Gil Evans (*Miles Ahead*, *Porgy and Bess*, *Sketches of Spain*), he had a talent for a transfixing musical logic and a scalding melancholy. It is true that those albums with Evans also reveal that Davis could be taken in by pastel versions of European colors (they are given what value they have in these sessions by the Afro-American dimensions that were never far from Davis's embouchure, breath, fingering); if Davis's trumpet voice is removed, in fact, a good number of Evans's arrangements sound like high-level television music. But these infirmities pale before the triumphant way that Davis summoned a range of idiomatic devices far richer in color and in conception than those of any of his fellow beboppers.

In the liner notes of *Porgy and Bess*, Davis noted a movement in jazz away from harmonic complexity toward simpler structures that emphasized melodic invention. In early 1959—the watershed year in which Ellington recorded *Jazz Party*; Coleman, *The Shape of Jazz to Come*; Coltrane, *Giant Steps*; Monk, *Orchestra at Town Hall*; and Mingus, *Blues and Roots* and *Ah Um*—Davis made *Kind of Blue*. Here the modal movement reached a pinnacle, precisely because Davis understood that blues should be the foundation of any important innovation in jazz. The record, which uses his sextet with Coltrane, Cannonball Adderley, and Bill Evans, has the feeling of a suite. It is dominated by the trumpeter's compositions. (On the one piece where straight-out swing was called for, Davis used Wynton Kelly instead of Evans; but on the softer pieces the things that Evans had learned from Debussy, George Russell, and Mingus issued in voicings of simple materials with intricate details.) This set realized all of the possibilities of cool jazz without sinking into the vacuous, the effete, the pretentious.

By 1960 Coltrane and Adderley left to lead their own bands, and Davis began to cope with a jazz scene of expanding technical and emotional means. Davis's playing continued to grow in power and intensity, but for all his success he was no longer the center of the discussion. The centers, instead, were Coltrane and Ornette Coleman, who were inspiring charlatans as well as serious musicians. It looked possible that the crown would slip from Davis's head, that he might be relegated to the neglect experienced by many of the older masters. Former Davis sidemen were leading the most imposing small bands of the day—Coltrane, Silver, Blakey, Adderley, Rollins. Musicians he

had been associated with, such as Monk and Mingus, were either refining, or adding to, the art, especially to its formal scope. In terms of pure bebop, Gillespie's quintet with James Moody was playing extraordinarily well, as was the Modern Jazz Quartet, with its lyrical use of percussion and harmony instruments. When his second great rhythm section of Wynton Kelly, Paul Chambers, and Jimmy Cobb left him in 1963, Davis had to rebuild for what became his last great period.

He soon found the musicians who provided the foundation for his final creative years. With *Seven Steps to Heaven*, Davis introduced George Coleman on tenor, another of the fine tenor players who had followed Coltrane into the band, and the rhythm section of Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter, and Tony Williams, the force that was to shape the orchestration and the propulsion of his next phase. The band with Coleman made its finest music in concert performances, released as *Four*, and *My Funny Valentine*. Wynton Marsalis has noted that on the many fast numbers of *Four*, Davis produced unorthodox phrases that are technically challenging and demand unique fingerings. *My Funny Valentine*, by contrast, and particularly the title tune, captured Davis in a moment of heroic intimacy that he rarely reached again.

When Wayne Shorter joined him in the fall of 1964, Davis had what has been considered his best group since the *Milestones* ensemble. In January 1965 the band recorded *E.S.P.*, and the music still sounds fresh. The trumpeter was in superb form, able to execute quickstep swing at fleet tempi with volatile penetration, to put the weight of his sound on mood pieces, to rear his way up through the blues with a fusion of bittersweet joy and what Martin Williams terms "communal anguish." The rhythm section played with a looseness that pivots off of Williams's cymbal splashes and unclinked rhythms, Carter walking some of the most impressive bass lines of the day, and Hancock developing his own version of the impressionism that Evans was making popular.

Shortly afterward, Davis went into the hospital for surgery and didn't return to work until late in the year, when he recorded *Live at the Plugged Nickel* in Chicago. At the Plugged Nickel he and his musicians were staring right in the face of the avant-garde of the period, spontaneously changing tempi and meters, playing common or uncommon notes over the harmonies, pulling in harsh timbres, all the while in a repertoire that was roughly the same as the trumpeter had been using for a decade. Again, as with

My Funny Valentine, the pieces were remade. Shorter was in such startling form that his improvisations remained influential through the 1980s. Davis himself seemed to be having trouble with his instrument; his authority on *E.S.P.* is rarely heard here. His "Stella by Starlight," however, with its masterful touches of brass color, is one of his supreme late efforts: it swells with intimacy, voices an elevated bitterness that seems to argue with the human condition, rises to a victorious swing.

The remainder of Davis's studio recordings with that band drew on the chromaticism of Warne Marsh and Lennie Tristano, who influenced Shorter and Hancock—and, to the surprise of almost all concerned, on popular dance music, on rhythm and blues and rock 'n' roll. Though the albums vary in quality, though they sometimes lack definitive swing or cohesive fire, even the weaker ones have at least a couple of first-rate performances. The range of ideas heard from the rhythm section put it in line with the best of the day, and Shorter wrote many fine compositions, especially on *Nefertiti*. But the clues to Davis's course were in his own pieces, in "Stuff" and in much of the work for *Filles de Kilimanjaro*. His extended "Country Son," which features perhaps Shorter's finest studio improvisation with Davis, revealed that he was capable of a flirtation with pop rhythms. He was headed, in fact, in the direction of Motown, the English bands, and the black rock of Sly Stone and Jimi Hendrix.

"Mademoiselle Mabry," on *Filles*, is a brilliant example of Davis's ability to elevate pop material. An innovation in jazz rhythm, it is an appropriation and an extension of Hendrix's "The Wind Cries Mary," and proof of what Davis might have done had he kept control of his popular sources, rather than succumb to them. The borrowing was in perfect keeping with the tradition begun by Armstrong's alchemical way with banal popular songs. In fact, what Davis does with popular influences throughout this recording shows off his sophistication and his ability to transform yet another universe of music in his own image.

That Davis was able to initiate what became known as fusion, or jazz rock, and with it to inspire musicians as different as Hancock, Rollins, Hubbard, and Coleman, shows what a powerful position he had in the minds of Afro-American jazzmen. Jimmy Heath described his position this way:

Miles led the way for a lot of people because he was one of the few who got through. He had the fine clothes, the expensive cars, the big house, all the maga-

zine articles and the pretty girls chasing him. He seemed he was on top of everything. Then you had all of this rock getting all of the press and it was like Elvis Presley all over again. Miles stepped out there and decided he was going to get himself some of that money and a lot of musicians followed his lead. It was like if Miles had led the pack for so long they didn't know how to stop following him, even if the music wasn't any good.

And then came the fall. In a *Silent Way*, in 1969, long, maudlin, boasting, Davis's sound mostly lost among electronic instruments, was no more than droning wallpaper music. A year later, with *Bitches Brew*, Davis was firmly on the path of the sellout. It sold more than any other Davis album, and fully launched jazz rock with its multiple keyboards, electronic guitars, static beats, and clutter. Davis's music became progressively trendy and dismal, as did his attire; at one point in the early 1970s, with his wraparound dark glasses and his puffed shoulders, the erstwhile master of cool looked like an extra from a science fiction B-movie. He was soon proclaiming that there were no Negroes other than Sonny Rollins who could play the saxophone, and that musicians like Ornette Coleman and Mingus needed to listen to Motown, which was "where it was at." Many hoped that this would be only a phase, but the phase has lasted 20 years. In his abject surrender to popular trends, Davis sank lowest in 1985 in *You're Under Arrest*, on which record one hears what is supposed to be the sound of cocaine snorting. His albums of recent years—*Tutu*, *Siesta*, *Amandla*, and the overblown fusion piece that fills two records on *Aura*—prove beyond any doubt that he has lost all interest in music of quality.

As usual, where Davis led, many followed. His pernicious effect on the music scene since he went rapaciously commercial reveals a great deal about the perdurability of Zip Coon and Jasper Jack in the worlds of jazz and rock, in the worlds of jazz and rock criticism, in Afro-American culture itself. The cult of ethnic authenticity often mistakes the lowest common denominator for an ideal. It begets a self-image that has succumbed to a nostalgia for the mud. What we get is the bugaboo blues of the noble savage, the surly and dangerous Negro who will have nothing to do with bourgeois conventions. (This kind of Negro has long supplied the ammunition for the war that many jazz and rock critics have waged against their own middle-class backgrounds.)

Davis's corruption occurred at about the time that the "oreo" innuendo became an instrument with which formerly rejected street Negroes and thugs began

to intimidate, and often manipulate, middle-class Afro-Americans in search of their roots, and of a "real" black culture. In this climate, obnoxious, vulgar, and anti-social behavior has been confused with black authenticity. This has led to blaxploitation in politics, in higher education, and in art—to Eldridge Cleaver, Huey Newton, and the Black Panthers; to black students at San Francisco State demanding that pimps be recruited to teach psychology classes; to the least inventive and most offensive work of Richard Pryor and Eddie Murphy; to the angry cartoon coons of Spike Lee and the flat, misogynist, gutter verse of Ice-T and racist rap groups like Public Enemy.

Davis provides many unwitting insights into such phenomena in his autobiography, *Miles*, written with Quincy Troupe. His is, at least in part, the story of a jet black Little Lord Fauntleroy attracted to the glamour and the fast life of the jazz world during the period when heroin was as important to the identity of the bebop generation as LSD was to the youth culture of the late 1960s. The book draws a number of interesting portraits—of Dexter Gordon, of Sugar Ray Robinson, of Philly Joe Jones—but it is overwhelmingly an outburst of inarticulateness, of profanity, of error, of self-inflation, and of parasitic paraphrasing of material from Jack Chambers's *Milestones*. Would Simon and Schuster publish such a book, without sending the manuscript to any number of experts for evaluations and corrections, if it were written by a white man? Perhaps the editors assumed that since Quincy Troupe is a Negro, he should know.

Davis's book is divided against itself. His sensitive and lyrical recollections of experience are constantly overwhelmed by his street corner poses. The trumpeter's desire to be perceived as the hippest of the hip has destroyed his powers of communication. This is particularly unfortunate, since his story falls far outside the clichés of jazz and racial lore. His father was a successful dentist and a gentleman farmer who reared his children to have a high sense of self-esteem. Davis recalls riding horses and living on a 300-acre estate; there was a cook and a maid. It was a world as full of sophistication as it was of superstition, as full of privilege as prejudice.

Davis tells of what he heard about the St. Louis Riot of 1917, of his father looking with a shotgun for the man who called his son a nigger, of a preference Negro bands had for light-skinned musicians that blocked a young friend of his from working with Jimmy Lunceford, of the way women started throwing them-

selves at him as he grew into his late teens. His involvement with music is well described, as are the personalities of many musicians he grew up with, some of whom fell by the wayside. There are powerful evocations of certain aspects of the times: of how drugs took over the lives of musicians, of the difficulties musicians had negotiating the territory between the cult world of bebop and the more general kind of success enjoyed by Ellington. And some of what is probably Troupe's best writing has nothing to do with music; the brief section on Sugar Ray Robinson sheds unexpected light on the influence of boxing on Davis's playing. If one listens to Davis's jabbing, suspenseful, aggressive improvisation on "Walkin'" from the 1961 Black Hawk recording, one hears not only Monk, but also, we can now say, Robinson:

Sugar Ray Robinson would put an opponent in four or five traps during every round in the first two or three rounds, just to see how his opponent would react. Ray would be reaching, and he would stay just out of reach so he could measure you to knock you out, and you didn't even know what was happening until, BANG! you found yourself counting stars. Then, on somebody else, he might hit him hard in his side—BANG!—after he made him miss a couple of jabs. He might do that in the first round. Then he'd tee-off on the sucker upside his head after hitting him eight or nine more times hard in the side. Maybe he'd hit him four or five times hard in the ribs, then back to the head. So by the fourth or fifth round, the sucker don't know what Ray's going to do to him next.

Once our memoirist gets to New York, however, the book begins to lose itself in contradictions and obscurities. On one page Davis will say that Parker was "teaching me a lot about music—chords and shit—that I would go play on the piano" when he went to Juilliard, and then a few pages later that "Bird didn't teach me much as far as music goes." Davis claims that he became the musical director of Parker's group, but Max Roach, who was also in the band, vehemently disputes the claim. (It is proof, he says, that the trumpeter has "become senile.") Davis recalls being taken to Minton's in Harlem for the great jam sessions by Fats Navarro, whom many considered second only to Gillespie, but then says, "I would tell him shit—technical shit—about the trumpet." Jimmy Heath has a rather different memory of what Davis did or did not learn from Navarro: "Fats ate Miles up every night. Miles couldn't outswing him, he couldn't overpower him, he couldn't outsweet him, he couldn't do anything except take that whipping on every tune."

On things racial, it's impossible to figure out from this book what Davis really felt. "I could learn more in one session at Minton's than it would take me two years to learn at Juilliard. At Juilliard, after it was all over, all I was going to know was a bunch of white styles: nothing new." But only one page later he says:

I couldn't believe that all them guys like Bird, Prez, Bean, all them cats wouldn't go to museums or libraries and borrow those musical scores so they could check out what was happening. I would go to the library and borrow scores by all those great composers, like Stravinsky, Alban Berg, Prokofiev. I wanted to see what was going on in all of music. Knowledge is freedom and ignorance is slavery, and I just couldn't believe someone could be that close to freedom and not take advantage of all the shit that they can. I have never understood why black people didn't take advantage of all the shit that they can.

Of the interracial couples that he saw in the clubs on 52nd Street, Davis observes:

A lot of white people, though, didn't like what was going on on 52nd Street.... They thought that they were being invaded by niggers from Harlem, so there was a lot racial tension around bebop. Black men were going with fine, rich white bitches. They were all over those niggers out in public and the niggers were clean as a motherfucker and talking all kind of hip shit. So you know a lot of white people, especially white men, didn't like this new shit.

And then, explaining why he didn't want to do an interview for *Playboy*, he declares, "All they have are blond women with big tits and flat asses or no asses. So who the fuck wants to see that all the time? Black guys like big asses, you know, and we like to kiss on the mouth and white women don't have no mouths to kiss on."

Davis's treatment of women is disgusting. He details the way he destroyed the career of his first wife, Francis Taylor, who was a dancer, and later, claiming that black women are too bossy, he cites Taylor as an example of the way a good colored woman ought to be. He volunteers tales of slapping Cicely Tyson around, though she was probably responsible for his not dying from a binge of cocaine that spanned nearly six years.

The cavalier way that Davis imputes drug use to black musician after black musician is no less objectionable. (He claims repeatedly that the white jazz press didn't start paying attention to white guys being junkies until Stan Getz was arrested, but Leonard Feather has shown that in fact white musicians got the bulk of the attention for using drugs.)

And the morality of the trumpeter's memory is oddly selective. About a woman who helped him during his time as a drug addict, Davis says, "I was seeing this same rich white girl who I'd met in St. Louis; she had come to New York to check me out. Let's call her 'Alice,' because she's still alive and I don't want to cause her trouble; plus she's married." And the customers of a white call girl were "very important men—white men mostly—whose names I won't mention." It seems that militant Inky respects the privacy of those mouthless, gluteus minimus white women and those white johns more than he does the dignity of his fellow musicians, some of whom were his very close friends.

One of the most disturbing things about *Miles* is its debt to Jack Chamber's *Milestones*, a critical biography written in two parts between 1983 and 1985 and now available in one volume from Quill. Pages 160-61 of *Miles*, for example, look alarmingly like pages 166-67 of *Milestones*. (There is even a cavalier reference to Chambers as "some writer.") Davis and Troupe:

Bird had an exclusive contract with Mercury (I think he had left Verve by then), so he had to use a pseudonym on record. Bird had given up shooting heroin because since Red Rodney had been busted and sent back to prison at Lexington, Bird thought the police were watching him. In place of his normal big doses of heroin, now he was drinking an enormous amount of alcohol.

Chambers:

... the man behind the pseudonym was Charlie Parker. Parker was under some pressure, not only because he had an exclusive contract with Mercury, but also because the trumpeter in his regular band, Red Rodney, had been arrested and committed to the federal prison in Lexington. Parker believed that he was being watched by narcotics agents, according to Ross Russell, and he had given up narcotics for the time being and was consuming large quantities of alcohol instead.

Much of the material used in *Milestones* and again in *Miles* comes from interviews done over the years. Troupe denies using any of it, then says that "the man can quote himself," then blames the publisher for "messing up" by omitting a discography and a bibliography, and by not checking facts.

But the important point, finally, is that *Miles* paints the picture of an often gloomy monster. It is full of stories that take the reader down into the sewers of Davis's musical, emotional, and chemical decline. Once the rage at his cruelty and his self-inflation has passed, we are left

aghast at a man of monumental insecurity who, for all his protests about white power and prejudice, is often controlled by his fear of it, or of any other significant power. (One example of many: Davis asserts that he never listens to white music critics, and blames many of the woes of the music business on them, but then he admits that once they had him worried that he sounded inferior to Chet Baker, who was his imitator.) Obsessed with remaining young, and therefore willing to follow any trend in pop music, Davis is now a surly sellout who wants his success to seem like a heroic battle against the white world.

To that end, this former master of musical articulation often reduces himself to

an inarticulate man. Davis has worn the mask of the street corner for too long; he thinks, like Pryor and Murphy and Lee, that his invective gives him authenticity. Gone is the elegant and exigent Afro-American authenticity of the likes of Ellington, at ease in the alley as well as in the palace, replaced by youth culture vulgarity that vandalizes the sweep and substance of Afro-American life. The fall of Davis reflects perhaps the essential failure of contemporary Negro culture: its mock-democratic idea that the elites, too, should lie down in the gutter. Aristocracies of culture, however, come not from the acceptance of limitations, but from the struggle with them, as a group or an individual, from within or without. •

Between the Acts

BY MICHAEL LEVENSON

Letters of Leonard Woolf edited by Frederic Spotts

(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 656 pp., \$29.95)

The Autobiography of Leonard Woolf

(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, five volumes, \$8.95 each, paper)

Picture Leonard Woolf, aged 28, inside a hut in the middle of the Ceylonese jungle, where he is in his fifth year as a quickly rising official in the British imperial service. This is 1909. A letter, now lost, arrives from Lytton Strachey. Woolf's closest friend from his Cambridge years, suggesting in terms we can only guess that Leonard marry Virginia Stephen. Woolf scarcely knows her, has seen her only a few times before, and not for five years. Two weeks later Strachey writes—why?—that Virginia is “sitting waiting for you.” In fact she is just then on her way back from Bayreuth, where she has been listening to Wagner at the end of a socially frenetic summer. But Strachey's insinuations take root. “Do you think Virginia would have me?” writes an only half-facetious Leonard. “Wire to me if she accepts.”

That two years later he came home to England after nearly seven years away, that he fell in love with Virginia Stephen almost immediately, that after a period of indecision she married him: these are signs of one of the salient features of Leonard Woolf's life and the lives of those around him, namely the way that fantasy could melt so easily into reality.

Leonard dreamed of Virginia and married her; he had dreamed of academic success and became a Cambridge Apostle; he dreamed of international government and helped to found the League of Nations; he imagined being an old Jew of 70 and lived to be 89.

It is part of the condition of liberal society to aim to the full emancipation of yet unrealized human gifts, to a release of personality from the constraints that inhibit its flowering, to a frictionless movement toward talent and virtue. No liberal would say that we have this condition within reach, but the picture hangs alluringly before us. What we call for ease of reference the Bloomsbury Group—that gang of British intellectuals, novelists, painters, and journalists who made a culture for themselves—can serve as an image of the liberal utopia. There they were, E. M. Forster and John Maynard Keynes, Lytton Strachey and Vanessa Bell, Leonard and Virginia, free from the greater stresses of material want, free from moral oppressions, free from shame, wealthy in talent, rich in wit; subtle, responsive, quick.

It is tempting to say that they possessed what most of us strive for, a life free from the unnecessary, unending dis-

An inch of time is an inch of gold.

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tortions that rub the luster from our virtues. Here is Virginia Woolf's description (in her diary) of a Bloomsbury party:

Suppose one's normal pulse to be 70; in five minutes it was 120: and the blood, not the sticky whitish fluid of daytime, but brilliant & prickling like champagne. This was my state & most peoples. . . . We were all easy & gifted & friendly & like good children rewarded by having the capacity for enjoying ourselves thus. Could our fathers? . . . There is something indescribably congenial to me in this easy artists talk; the values the same as my own & therefore right; no impediments; life charming, good & interesting; no effort; art brooding calmly over it all; & none of this attachment to mundane things.

Glamour dominates the scene, and not just glamour, but an aura of seasoned friendship and perfect mutual understanding. And yet anyone who has spent time contemplating the social history of Bloomsbury has seen the rank grease that lies just beneath the glittering surface. Inside the friendship there is the threat of betrayal; within the talent there is self-doubt; and with all the freedom there are new inhibitions.

In a famous moment of self-revelation, John Stuart Mill imagined that all his plans for human betterment were achieved, and then realized that even if his most cherished reforms came to fruition, still he would not be happy: such an insight gives us one way to read Bloomsbury, as the genuine fulfillment of certain utopian possibilities and also as the exposure of the limits of talent, the limits of freedom, the limits of utopia. In the jungle of Ceylon, Leonard Woolf imagined that marriage to Virginia Stephen would be the one possible solution to the probable failure of his life. A year after the marriage, Virginia fell into a pro-

longed emotional crisis, including a suicidal depression. At various points Leonard, following the advice of doctors, resorted to force feeding; at other points, Virginia chased her husband away with torrents of verbal abuse.

We now know more about the lives of Leonard and Virginia Woolf than we know about our own lives. Can you reconstruct your fantasies, dispositions, intentions, and anxieties of an afternoon five years ago? Not likely. But if you care to, you can now discover what the Woolfs felt on a morning 50 years ago, and I can tell you thoughts that neither knew the other had. I know them—this is a lie, but nearly a truth—better than they knew each other.

I take this throwing open of the windows of the self, this psychic transparency, this biographical surgery, to be neither a good thing nor a bad thing, but simply our thing, and for some of us, an irresistible thing. Theirs were not only real lives; they were symbolic lives, so consistently afloat in the main currents of the century that we can use them as bell buoys. Awkward though it is, the biographical intrusion has created images of two lives that have a personal and historical density against which to measure the prevailing meagerness. What we call the Woolf industry has for some time been busily constructing a high-resolution picture of Virginia Woolf. In the five volumes of his autobiography, written in the last two decades of his long life, Leonard Woolf delivered an image of himself, fashioning it with honesty but also with a strategically self-protective reticence. Now, with the publication of *The Letters of Leonard Woolf*, it is his turn to endure the embarrassments of disclosure.

When he arrived in Cambridge in 1901, Leonard Woolf found himself inside a drama that has been played out many other times in this century, but never with the same innocence of those who were young when the century was new. It was the drama of Revolution among the Intellectuals. Woolf read Ibsen, smoked by the fire, despised the philistines, talked philosophy while lying on the hearth rug. Over half a century later he remembered the blood thrill:

We found ourselves living in the springtime of a conscious revolt against the social, political, religious,

moral, intellectual, and artistic institutions, beliefs, and standards of our fathers and grandfathers. . . . There was no shadow of past defeat; the omens were all favorable. We were not, as we are today, fighting with our backs to the wall against a resurgence of barbarism and barbarians. We were not part of a negative movement of destruction against the past. We were out to construct something new; we were in the van of the builders of a new society which should be free, rational, civilized, pursuing truth and beauty. It was all tremendously exhilarating.

But when Woolf identifies that enlightened "we," so eager to revolutionize world society on the basis of Cambridge philosophy, it shrinks to a group of perhaps ten, with an inner circle of just four, all but one members of the semisecret conversation society known familiarly as the Apostles. Becoming an Apostle was likely the most decisive event in Woolf's life—not only because it permanently connected him with a group of brilliant people, Strachey, Forster, Keynes, and G. E. Moore, but more fundamentally because it lured him away from single-minded academic professionalism into the joys of cultivated sociability. Woolf's undergraduate years played out, on a grander scale, the perpetual tension of undergraduate life: the conflict between stark intellectual purity and the luscious impurity of adolescent community.

He paid for those evenings on the hearth rug. He performed disappointingly on his first set of exams, the Classical Tripos, Part I; and then a year later he was still more disappointing on Part II. Any hopes of an academic fellowship having been smashed, he took the Civil Service exam, and another mediocre score led him to Ceylon, where he spent the years 1905-11, sinking into depression as Cambridge receded into the past. The letters Woolf wrote to Strachey during the Ceylon years, perhaps the most interesting in this volume of the *Letters*, register an awful drift from shine to tarnish. At 25 he looks back on the Cambridge years and summarizes his downward course:

We are wild in 1901 but only in 1902 are we magnificent. The strange thing is, to me, that the boom lasts so short a time: it is only for a few months that we are on the heights & happy for we obviously are happy for a time. The blackness begins to settle already in 1903, an extraordinary gloom into which we have been sinking more & more.

In the jargon of the Cambridge clique, life could be "supreme" or it could be "degraded," and although this seems childishly heightened rhetoric, it may be apt for the strong contrasts of Woolf's

Sonnet, on Magda's Return

I am the one for whom the peacock feather,
Rescued from a footpath at the local zoo,
Is unforgotten through an afternoon
Of nilgai, puma, bison, llama, leopard;
At me—deprived, unlucky, left at home—
This shimmering thing, this offering to Mommy
Is thrust in an outstretched, exultant arm,
Accompanied, in vanishing soprano,
By a sing-song, half catalogue and half narration,
Filled with names I barely knew in that prehistory,
That lusterless *before-you-were-born*
When a jaguar and a cheetah looked the same to me.
O, bearer of a gold and green and turquoise eye,
The legend has it wrong. *You are the magi.*

JACQUELINE OSHEROW

life. On the one side there was the genius of his wife, the philosophical sparkle of the Apostles, the political confidence that led to the League of Nations. On the other side there was his wife's mental suffering, the brittleness and inconsequence of the Apostles, and the political catastrophe of the League. The titles of the third and fourth volumes of his autobiography capture the rhythm of his life: *Beginning Again* (1911-18) and *Downhill All the Way* (1919-39).

Because Woolf was so near for so long to major eddies in modernist culture and modern politics, and because he never became an influential actor but remained a clear-eyed spectator—"I am, I feel it, usually a mere spectator with my hands in my pockets"—he plays an exemplary part as one of our century's great witnesses. If George Orwell had never existed, we might not have had to invent him, because we already had Leonard Woolf. Not that the two figures should be confused—but they have played much the same role in our cultural mythology: the role of the Plain Speaker, unhoodwinkable, unpretentious, unintimidated, who routs fakery and saves us from the various self-deceptions that are the special talent of our age. Woolf was not as gifted as Orwell; he didn't impress himself on the epoch or shape his vision into memorable fictions. But that very limitation gives him an interest Orwell cannot have for us, the interest of someone recognizably like ourselves who has wandered, wide-eyed but clear-eyed, into the dressing rooms of genius.

"I felt," he once wrote, "and still feel, an irresistible desire to experience anything." No aspect of his life is more conspicuous than the working of this desire. He was not exactly a wild adventurer—there is a curiously mediated quality to his experiences—but he set no store by a straight path. He strolled with the Apostles at Cambridge, administered the Empire in Ceylon, married Virginia Stephen, wrote two novels (one more mediocre than the other), became a publisher, an editor, a Labour Party activist, served on countless boards, committees, and councils. As he once put it: "having failed as (a) a civil servant, (b) a novelist, (c) an editor, (d) a publicist, I have now sunk to the last rung . . . literary journalism." He spent five decades scrambling up and down the rungs of vocation.

"Amateur" is the word for Woolf, a word he freely pins on himself. His amateurism is not the inconstancy of a dilettante; it is, or at least it becomes, a conscious design for living. One of his cherished beliefs was that no one should do the same work for more than seven

years at a time, and he proudly asserts his near perfect obedience to that rule. What separated him from the luminaries around him is that he, almost alone, heard no calling and pursued no profession. Woolf took this as no invitation to leisure, but as an opening for ceaseless activity. Thinking that it might be therapeutic to share the hobby of printing with his wife, he taught himself how to be a publisher, with the Hogarth Press eventually bringing out works by T. S. Eliot, Freud, Rilke, Gorky, not to say Virginia Woolf. Coming to the view that humanity needed a theory of collective psychology that could explain the course of modern history and could help prevent war, he set out to devise such a theory, spending the better part of 33 years on the project.

"I have often irritated people," Woolf once admitted, "by saying that an intelligent person can become what is called an 'authority' on most 'questions,' 'problems,' or 'subjects' by intensive study for two or three months." So in resolving to write what became three volumes and a thousand pages of historical/social/psychological analysis, he decided that "though I was not a professional sociologist, historian, or psychologist, I would try to do as an amateur what the profes-

sionals had left undone." When the last volume, *Principia Politica*, was published, the professionals hooted it down; and to read it today is to feel that the work is a quaint relic of another era. Still, as one who spat in the face of the experts, the professionals, and the specialists, Woolf is an exemplary refuser who simply declined to squeeze his ambitions to fit into the available slots.

To put it this way is to give his life a well-deserved dignity. But there is, worryingly, another way of putting it. In Woolf's determined plunge to experience "anything," the question inevitably arises: What does "anything" have to do with "anything else"? What, for instance, does being Jewish have to do with being Bloomsbury? By his own account, nothing much. Leonard threw off his belief when he was young and tended to make light of his ethnicity; none of his best friends was Jewish. Taking religion as an unhappy relic of a superstitious past, he set out to lead a thoroughly post-religious life. And yet, three years into their marriage, Virginia can react to Leonard's sister, Flora, by confiding to her diary, "I do not like the Jewish voice; I do not like the Jewish laugh." And in that strangest of novels, *The Wise Virgins* (1914), Leonard can paint himself in the

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guise of Harry Davis, who rants mournfully, "I'm a Jew, I tell you—I'm a Jew," and whose relationship with the Virginia Stephen character founders on the rock of his Jew-consciousness.

The flaring and the fading of Woolf's Jewishness is part of the condition of a life in which each turn of attention to a new region of experience risks obliterating every other. A chilling instance occurs in his autobiography, where he tersely reviews the last stages of Virginia Woolf's life: "In 1938 we published *Three Guineas* and in 1940 *Roger Fry*. On February 26, 1941, she finished *Between the Acts* and, as had happened four years before, she fell into the depths of despair. On March 28 she drowned herself in the Ouse." Then the next paragraph begins—and how could it?—"I must return to the subject of our income."

What was it, then, that he led over those 89 years? A life? Or was it many lives, speciously unified by the proper name, Leonard Woolf, tagged on them all? These are not idle questions; they suggest much about the problem of personal identity in our nervous century, and they are brought into sharp relief by the publication of the *Letters of Leonard Woolf* alongside a reissue of the five volumes of his autobiography. Taken together, the works reveal the tension between the two roles, the letter-writer and the autobiographer, between life apprehended from within the quick stream of living and life apprehended from the summit of recollection. In one of the early letters written from Ceylon, Woolf translates a Tamil parable: "I saw a teacher & his disciple sitting under a tree; the age of the disciple was eighty & the age of the teacher eighteen." When he wrote this, he could not have known that he would live to be nearly 90, and that he would spend most of his last decade writing an autobiography. Nor could he have anticipated that he would leave behind so many letters that are to the autobiographer what the 18-year-old teacher is to the 80-year-old disciple: the bearer of the wisdom of inexperience.

In the first volume of the autobiography, *Sowing* (1880-1904), Woolf recalls his days at Cambridge and summons a portrait of Keynes, of whom he writes that "in all the years that I knew Maynard and in all the many relations, of intimacy and business which I had with him, I never had even the ghost of a quarrel or the shadow of unpleasantness, though we often disagreed about things, persons, or policies. He was essentially a lovable person." That is the voice of the serenely aging autobiographer in the late 1950s. Here, in a 1908 letter to Strachey, is the voice of youth: "I detest Keynes don't you? Looking back on him from 4 years, I see he is fundamentally evil if ever anyone was."

Was Keynes for Woolf "essentially lovable" or "fundamentally evil"? Bad question: Woolf didn't hang together like that. With the publication of his letters, the seamless whole of the autobiography is torn, the open fabric revealing a more interesting, but also a more disturbing, life. Now we know that less than two years after the bloated body of Virginia Woolf was fished out of the River Ouse, Leonard fell passionately in love with Trekkie Parsons, the wife of Ian Parsons, who became one of his most important publishing associates. Does this fact, now so unambiguously documented in these letters, streak the moral image of Leonard Woolf? I don't know, but I find it irritating and distorting that two personal events of such consequence, the suicide of Virginia Woolf and the romance with Trekkie Parsons, are separated by less than two years in Leonard's life and by more than 200 pages in this edition of his letters. This is because the editor decided to organize the correspondence by subject, so that the suicide comes under the heading "Life with Virginia" and the Parsons romance falls under "Later Years." The justification, as the editor puts it, is "to allow the various strands of Leonard's life to emerge clearly."

But it's not the strands that we want to see clearly; it's the web, if there is one. When he was over 70, he received a frightful letter from his brother Edgar (who was over 60). In its short space, it accuses Leonard of nearly every recorded vice, naming him finally the "lickspittle of greater intellects." But what shocked Leonard, as he tells the readers of his autobiography, was not the series of accusations (of cruelty, treachery, and greed), which he accepted as a fair reading of his moral underside. Instead, "what shocked me and saddened me was

that I should have known someone intimately for over half a century and have liked him, and never in all those years been aware of his hatred and contempt of me." Then, when he sat down to write the autobiography several years later, he wrote to Edgar asking permission to cite the letter with all its holy terror.

It is a mark of Woolf's severity as a witness that he could look at his own life from the standpoint of his howling, hating brother; could see it (for reasons never quite clear) as a life dominated by cowardice; could see it, cheerfully, austerely, as a happy life full of failure. Through all the personal and political turns, one part of his mind always kept at a detached remove from happiness and horror. He remained the complete atheistical skeptic who awaited extinction without stooping to consolation, and who liked to remind himself that finally, really, "Nothing Matters."

But if "Nothing Matters" was tattooed on one moral bicep, "Work Hard" was written on the other. This is what makes him an important figure to watch on the century's stage, this love of labor never separable from a sense of futility. With a characteristic mania for detail, he calculated that in his adult life he spent (at minimum) 158,720 hours applying himself with "invincible," "indefatigable," "imperishable" stamina to "perfectly useless work." The only thing more pronounced than his perfect skepticism was his relentless energy. Living without faith, working without rest, Woolf becomes an icy self-portrait for some of us, bringing the good pain of clarity into our usual muddle.

MICHAEL LEVENSON is the author of *Modernism and the Fate of Individuality*, forthcoming from Cambridge University Press.

The Rules of His Game

BY STANLEY KAUFFMANN

Renoir on Renoir: Interviews, Essays, and Remarks by Jean Renoir translated by Carol Volk

(Cambridge University Press, 304 pp., \$47.50, \$14.95 paper)

A great deal of film criticism is deliberately based on delusion. The more serious the criticism, the more intense the delusion is likely to be. Film critics write endlessly about directors as if they were poets or painters or novel-

ists, as if the choice of subject or style, the sheer ability to work, were all completely at a director's disposal. This fantasy is perpetuated in order to make film criticism more closely analogous to other art criticism. In point of fact, a director's options—if he ever gets them—usually

arrive late in his career, after he becomes really visible. If he or she continues to be visible, it is because his films make a profit.

A composer, though he may not be performed, can write what he likes; an architect, though his designs may not be executed, can draw what he likes; a playwright, though his work may languish unseen, can write what he likes. But a filmmaker, though he can write screenplays, cannot really move without money. A composer's or playwright's or architect's unfulfilled work can be published. But who is going to publish unproduced film scripts, and who would be able to read them comprehendingly if they were published?

Yet critics, myself included, continue to write about film as if directors were as freely responsive to impulse as poets or painters. We have no alternative. One cannot discuss A's new film as more sentimental than his last because his producers insisted on it before they would finance it, or discuss B's career as flourishing or thin because of stock market conditions. This would soon cease to be criticism at all, would be merely a kind of investigative reporting of little use to reader or filmmaker in any artistic sense. Yet the hard fact remains: most filmmakers, no matter how successful, spend a large part of their careers looking for money in order to have careers. A bacteriologist once told me that he had trained for years only to find himself unable to do a lick of work without five million dollars' worth of equipment. A filmmaker intent on making a first-line feature would feel lucky with a budget that small.

But great film careers exist, and potentially important ones grow. Each of those artists has had to find ways to deal with many obstacles along the way, and in many instances we can see how much of a life has been spent on overcoming those obstacles—or in not overcoming them (Carl Dreyer, for instance). Of those who succeeded in this nuts-and-bolts job, no major director has triumphed in quite the same way as Jean Renoir.

Renoir (1894-1979) was the film world's great embracer. This is made manifest in *Renoir on Renoir*, which assembles the interviews that he gave to editors of the French journal *Cahiers du Cinéma* and talks that he did for French television between 1954 and 1967. No one knows better than Renoir that films cost cash: "It's wrong to think that films are decided for purely artistic reasons. It is, after all, a business. It has to sell, and so other considerations come into play." But with outsize geniality he has found a

way to co-opt this condition:

Often people say to me, "Oh! producers are disgraceful people, disgusting people, they think only of money, they think only of how much they'll make."... It isn't true! I claim that producers are the most disinterested people in the world, they are people who really love film.

His only objection to them is that they want to make what they call good films, while he wants to "bring in a little piece of humanity."

Any director who could reach that formulation in the face of experience (for instance, he couldn't raise the money for *Grand Illusion* until Jean Gabin agreed to be in it) has arranged a pleasant state of mind for himself—in fact, one through which that "little piece of humanity" is more likely to be permitted. Whatever the blandishments he had to practice on others and himself, the results of his tactics lie before us: a body of about 40 films that range widely in subject (more widely than is generally assumed) and in quality (more widely than is generally assumed), but are in the main informed with the spirit coursing through these interviews—broad and high, generous and compassionate, humanistically concerned.

How Renoir loved to talk! These closely printed pages contain only a portion of the interviews he gave during his life; some others I know are equally interesting. (See the long, enlightening interview given in 1972 in Charles Thomas Samuels's *Encountering Directors*, published by Da Capo.) Of course he repeats. Several times in this book he tells us that the course of painting was altered by the invention of paints that could be kept in tubes—instead of being freshly mixed in a studio—so that the artist could paint on location. I heard him tell the same story again on American TV. Nor could discourse delivered from a throne to which others had elevated him be free of airy affectations: "All that is ugly in this 20th-century civilization comes from plans. Plans are ugly.... That's why there is no architecture, because there are blueprints."

Distance from events in the past allows him to bend some events to fit his latter-day persona. Speaking of the marquise in *The Rules of the Game*, he says he chose Nora Gregor for the role because "I wanted to have a Viennese woman play this rather romantic part." Several other books tell us that he really wanted a non-Viennese, Simone Simon, for the marquise (she had just acted for him in *The Human Beast*), but Simon's price was too high, so he took Gregor. Still, the current of his talk is so full and free-flowing that

perhaps these interviews, plus all the others he gave elsewhere, explain why his autobiography, *My Life and My Films* (1974), is meager: he had said most of it before.

That current of talk brings us riches, of more than one kind. Speaking of how he depends on collaboration as part of creation, how he folds it into his work:

It's difficult to be sincere when you're all alone. Some people manage to do it, and they are gifted writers. I'm much less gifted, and I can only really find my own expressions when I'm in contact with others.

A compact description of the perfect filmmaking temperament. (I should note



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The Truman Presidency

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that Renoir usually collaborated on his screenplays, usually originating the ideas. Some were solo efforts.)

A sample of Renoir's intrinsically filmic imagination:

What helped me to do *The Human Beast* were the hero's explanations of his atavism. I said to myself: This isn't really beautiful, but if a man as handsome as Gabin were to say it outdoors, with lots of horizon behind him and maybe with some wind, it could have some value.

On technical difficulties:

That's perhaps the main thing about film, which is why certain films have become so important . . . to the history of culture and modern civilization. It's that the film medium carries technical obstacles that make it a slow means of expression (you can't shoot a film quickly), and this battle with technical obstacles forces you—more than in any other medium—to discover and rediscover.

On acting (he acted in some of his films):

It's rather difficult to dive into sincerity in the same way that one dives off a diving board into the Mediterranean at St. Tropez; that's not the way it's done. Sincerity fights back, you have to win it over, you have to caress it, and then, finally, you get it.

On realism:

Nana was the first film in which I discovered that one doesn't copy nature but must reconstruct it. . . . I discovered that it was better to invent something, to create something bad, than merely to copy nature. . . . I am absolutely convinced that the way in which a writer like Zola, like Maupassant, translated what he saw around him was just as digested, just as composed, as it was for a writer like Marivaux.

On the subject for which he is aesthetically most noted, the use of theater ideas of space in film (after the interviewer says that Renoir has been abolishing the border between film and theater):

There is obviously a great risk there, but I believe that we crossed this border on the day we accepted that films would speak. As soon as we accepted that, we were forced to accept certain rules of the theater.

On the ideal viewer:

To love a film, one must be a would-be filmmaker. You have to be able to say to yourself, "I would have done it this way, I would have done it that way." You have to make films yourself, if only in your mind. . . . If not, you're not worthy of going to the movies.

These comments are a long way from the pretentious or banal natterings of most film-journal interviews. The interviews as a whole disclose a generous and cultivated man, genuinely and also slyly self-critical, imaginative yet sometimes merely fanciful, at all times a source of beaming warmth. Soon the suspicion

grows that Renoir sees these interviews—all his interviews—as components of his career. He was not greatly guileful, but neither was he too naive to know the sort of persona he had; and he knew that to make that persona as present as possible would only make his films more resonant.

He kept up this process so long that by now those who know Renoir feel that the man reflects the films and vice versa. This is not true of other book-length interviews with first-rank directors—Hitchcock interviewed by Truffaut and Bergman interviewed by Björkman, Manns, and Sima. Hitchcock's interview provides fascinating information about the making of his films, but no one except a specialist need read it in order to enjoy those films. Bergman's book, intellectually the first of the three, can be read with profit by any cultivated person who never saw, or never cares to see, his films. But these Renoir interviews seem almost synergistic with his work. Obviously, they need not be read in order to enjoy the films; obviously, too, once read, they seem essential.

This is dangerous. A persona has always been adduced from Renoir's films; its reinforcement by these and other interviews makes the persona so seductive that it can blur judgment of the films themselves. I have no intent in the emperor's-new-clothes vein: Renoir is one of the great figures in film history. But he is not, as he has more than once been called, the peer of Shakespeare, nor (a premise in some of the books about him) are all his films of equal interest.

In the last month I've seen six Renoir films again, mostly from his most productive period, the '30s in France. Two of them, *Grand Illusion* (1937) and *The Rules of the Game* (1939), are unshakable, time-proof masterpieces. *Boudu Saved from Drowning* (1932), about a modern Pan invited into civilization, is both winning and a bit cute; and its occasional technical roughness can't be attributed to its date. (René Clair made three much more polished comedies several years earlier in the sound era.) *The Crimes of M. Lange* (1935) blends stock gay-Paree romantic quaintness with Popular Front characterizations. (Renoir was involved in French Communist Party activities in the mid-1930s—he led the cinema wing of the Popular Front.) The film's lovely cursive camerawork doesn't greatly exalt it. (Both *M. Lange* and *Grand Illusion* end with two people crossing an international border. Hope against hope of betterment elsewhere.)

La Marseillaise (1937) has historical acuity, but it ambles and it has some poor casting. *The Human Beast* (1938), from

Zola, begins with ten minutes in the cab of a railway locomotive en route from Paris to Le Havre that are a masterly evocation of railway workers' lives and of the atmosphere of the story that is to follow. Also, like several other films of Renoir's, it dispels the idea that his work is all sunny and affirmative. But the inherited affliction of the engineer (Gabin) is treated more like an old-fashioned gypsy curse than like a symbol of generations of oppression, and what was intended as tragedy is stunted into melodrama. *The River* (1950), made in India—after his wartime Hollywood sojourn—from a Rumer Godden novel, has more lovely camera work, but now looks like the granddaddy of "Masterpiece Theater."

Yet seeing these films again confirms his directorial distinction and his personal flavor. That incorrigible charmer, Renoir himself, will, rightly, have the last word on all this: because of the length and variety of his career, the huge influence he has had on subsequent filmmakers, and because his persona, preserved in these interviews and inferable anyway from his films, is like a guardian angel against even sympathetic criticism.

And, in the traffic of the film world, that persona made him the supreme example of the director who, like a judo expert, could turn the pressures of brute filmmaking conditions against themselves: "I always imagine that the film I'm going to make will be an extremely marketable film, which will delight all the distributors. . . . I try to make as marketable a film as possible." This remark is like Bernard Shaw's comment on the female roles in his plays—that he was an excellent ladies' tailor. Both comments typify an artist's purposely transparent practicality as proof of his profound suitability for his art.

The whole Renoir book substantiates what André S. Labarthe, one of the *Cahiers* interviewers, says in a prefatory note: "Renoir doesn't converse at all. He doesn't try to convince his interlocutor, but rather, he tries to overwhelm him." This was wicked of Renoir, because he almost always succeeds. •

TRB continued from page 4

lutely free (apart from the \$2,500 application fee, \$1,000 for small businesses): a "Feedback Report" summarizing my strengths, my "areas for improvement"—tactful phrasing there—and my "overall quality management profile." Then all I have to do is get my Mommy to sign it and return it to Secretary Mosbacher for a little gold star.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

WASHINGTON DIARIST

Gorby's demons

I DON'T GET IT. MIKHAIL GORBACHEV presides over the collapse of the Communist bloc, the sinking of the Soviet economy, and the trashing of socialism as a moral, political, and economic ideal. For this, *Time* makes him Man of the Decade. Malcolm Forbes insists that Gorbachev "freed" Eastern Europe. Ken Adelman, a certifiable Reaganaut, writes in *American Enterprise* that Gorbachev has changed all of us. Speak for yourself, Ken. If these folks are right about Gorby, there's a rule of thumb for judging world-class movers and shakers that I wasn't told about it. Based on Gorby's record, the rule must be that the worse things get, the more your schemes go awry, the more you're buffeted like a feather by historical forces large and small, the higher your rating as a molder of the modern world. In truth, Gorbachev is shaping events about as decisively as Czar Nicholas II did after World War I broke out. There's one exception: Gorbachev has been skillful in shaping his own image. This has made him the most overrated man in the world.

DOES ANYONE REMEMBER THE distinction between leaders who make events happen and those whose time in office is eventful? It's relevant in Gorbachev's case. He's not an event-maker, except in the sense that his reluctance to use force in Eastern Europe has allowed things to happen. I don't mean to diminish the significance of this act of omission. But it's not the same as an act of commission that actually causes, say, a non-Communist government to spring up in Poland. In Eastern Europe Gorbachev's goal has been the creation of reform Communist regimes. He's failing miserably. Instead, he's confronted by people like President Vaclav Havel of Czechoslovakia, who refused to take the oath of office until it was stripped of words swearing allegiance to socialism. Gorby shouldn't get credit for the emergence of Havel. He merely acceded to it. Gorbachev is a classic reform-minded autocrat. He opened the door a crack and was inundated by the forces of change. He's barely able to stay afloat. Consider his brave but ineffectual weekend as a street performer in Lithuania. Gorbachev started by making a huge

concession—he'd go along with secession, only the details would have to be worked out first—but even that got him nowhere. His visit to Lithuania was an effort to get in front of the curve of history. He was too late. He was forced to eat history's dust. That's the fate of leaders whose tenures are eventful.

THE AMAZING EFFECT THAT GORBACHEV has on the American press (and presumably on the European press) distorts coverage. Every story involving Gorbachev is centered on him. In Lithuania the coverage was not framed as a small country's courageous and justified defiance of an oppressor. Rather, it concentrated on whether Gorbachev would be able to cajole Lithuanians into cooling their demands for freedom. The implication was that everyone will be better off if Gorbachev succeeds. I think President Bush bears some responsibility for Gorby-worship in the media. He and Secretary of State James Baker have stifled any criticism or honest assessments of Gorbachev by Administration officials. If Defense Secretary Richard Cheney or Robert Gates, the deputy national security adviser, were unmuzzled, I'm sure they'd have plenty of negative things to say. They'd attract press coverage. As it stands, the Administration speaks with one upbeat voice about Gorby. Bush says he wants *perestroika* to succeed. A White House reporter should ask Bush what he means by *perestroika*. I'll bet he doesn't have the foggiest.

WHEN EXACTLY DID COMMUNISM blink? Practically nothing has been written on this important question. I have the answer—or at least Paul Nitze, the arms control adviser in the Reagan Administration, does. Nitze says he heard from Gorbachev himself when the historic turn away from expansionist communism began. Nitze accompanied Secretary of State George Shultz on periodic trips to Moscow in 1986 and 1987 to discuss arms control. Gorbachev would show up at the start of the talks to attack the United States for one thing or another. Then he'd depart and negotiations would proceed. Once he stayed around to chat informally. Gorbachev said he hadn't been blindsided by his country's humongous problems when he took over as general secretary in 1985. Several years earlier—probably in late 1983—he and Nikolai Ryzhkov (who's now premier) created scores of task forces to study internal problems of the Soviet Union. Nitze, recalling George Kennan's famous article on containing Soviet expansionism, knew the significance of this. Containment will be successful, Kennan wrote, when the Soviets turn inward and confront the shortcomings and

contradictions of domestic communism. With the task forces, they did. At the time, Gorbachev was agriculture commissar, Ryzhkov the head of Gosplan, the economic planning bureau.

WHY HAS THE SOVIET MILITARY continued to back Gorbachev as he allows the empire to fall apart and makes concession after concession in arms control negotiations? Edward Luttwak of the Center for Strategic and International Studies has the best answer I've heard. He says the Soviet general staff isn't interested in territory or nuclear weapons anymore. Controlling Eastern Europe costs money and drains military resources. Nuclear weapons are also costly, and they're too powerful to be used in any realistic war of conquest. The future is non-nuclear, highly accurate missiles that can be targeted with breathtaking accuracy. Luttwak says the new weapons, once perfected, could be pinpointed on such small targets as Cheney's limousine while he rides to work at the Pentagon. The missiles would be directed by satellites in space, a type of warfare similar to today's video games. They can be fired from the Soviet Union, so vast chunks of territory aren't crucial anymore. The Soviet generals want warm ties with the West, permitting them to cut troop levels, trim their nuclear arsenal, and devote resources to the new weaponry. Gorbachev is providing this. The use of Soviet troops in Eastern Europe, crack-down on dissidents at home, insistence on fighting on in Afghanistan—all this would chill relations with Europe and America. They'd be counterproductive. So the military doesn't urge them on Gorbachev. If the Soviets leap ahead in high-tech weaponry, they'll once again be a military threat, Luttwak says. There's nothing far-fetched about this. Brent Scowcroft, Bush's national security adviser, agreed to a 30-minute briefing by Luttwak recently. Scowcroft kept Luttwak talking for 90 minutes.

THREE BIG TRENDS TOOK OFF IN the 1980s: the disintegration of communism, the resurgence of capitalism, and the globalization of the economy. The best that can be said for Gorby is that he acceded to one, communism's fall. But it's more accurate to say that he's beset by this trend, bedeviled by it, compelled to cope with it any way he can. That's also true of the other two. Capitalism's success makes communism's failure all the more glaring and painful. The globalized economy is the arena for advancing technology, and the Soviets aren't part of it. Wladyslaw Pleszczynski of the *American Spectator* says Gorbachev is the Victim of the 1980s, not the main man. I'll buy that.

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